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A  
VINDICATION  
OF  
INFANT BAPTISM:

IN WHICH THE  
ARGUMENTS OF THE ANTIPÆDOBAPTISTS  
ARE CONFUTED

BY SCRIPTURAL TESTIMONY, AND THE AUTHORITY  
OF THE CHRISTIAN CHURCH IN ITS EARLIEST  
AND PUREST AGES.

WITH A  
REVIEW OF DR. GALE'S ANSWER TO DR. WALL,

AND OF  
DR. COX'S RECENTLY PUBLISHED WORK  
“ON BAPTISM.”

---

BY JOHN F. COLLS,  
OF TRINITY COLLEGE, CAMBRIDGE.

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and the *lungs* were *normal* and *sound*.

The *liver* was *normal* and *sound*.

The *kidneys* were *normal* and *sound*.

The *bladder* was *normal* and *sound*.

The *uterus* was *normal* and *sound*.

The *ovaries* were *normal* and *sound*.

The *rectum* was *normal* and *sound*.

The *colon* was *normal* and *sound*.

The *bladder* was *normal* and *sound*.

The *uterus* was *normal* and *sound*.

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The *colon* was *normal* and *sound*.

The *bladder* was *normal* and *sound*.



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the first time in the history of  
Russia and now it is the largest among  
the European countries. It is the  
most important in its influence  
upon the world economy, and  
upon the political life of Europe.  
It is the most powerful in its  
military strength, and  
in its naval power.  
It is the most advanced in its  
industrial development, and  
in its agricultural production.  
It is the most populous country in Europe,  
and the second largest in the world.  
It is the most extensive in its  
territory, and the third largest in the world.  
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and the second largest in the world.  
It is the most extensive in its  
territory, and the third largest in the world.



TO THE RIGHT REVEREND THE LORD  
BISHOP OF ROCHESTER.

---

MY LORD,

HAVING received your Lordship's permission to dedicate to you my "Vindication of Infant Baptism," I avail myself of this opportunity to express my gratitude for your condescension, and for the interest you have so kindly taken in my Theological studies. Permit me to assure your Lordship, that the same encouragement which animated me in the labour necessary for this work, will

continue to incite me in the pursuit of that learning, which is indispensable to the **Christian Ministry**, and in that performance of its duties, without which **I** cannot hope to deserve your **Lordship's** further approbation.

I have the honor to be

**Your Lordship's**

**Most obliged and obedient**

**Servant,**

**JOHN F. COLLS.**



## ON INFANT BAPTISM.

---

### PRELIMINARY OBSERVATIONS.

---

BEFORE I proceed to consider this subject in detail, I think it necessary to give the reader a summary view of the whole question, to enable him to arrive the more readily at a clear comprehension of the particular bearings of this important and much-agitated inquiry. The Antipedobaptists sometimes complain that, while they have the best of the argument, popular prejudices and popular publications are almost wholly on the other side; and that they have, therefore, the disadvantage of labouring against the prevailing opinions, and the theological literature of the age. I am far from thinking that, with superficial readers, of which the number is by no means inconsiderable, their disadvantages are so great as they would have us believe; and I am sure that I

detract nothing from the decisive evidence which I am about to produce in defence of Infant Baptism, when I avow, that the Antipædobaptist argument wears, on the first surface of it, an ensnaring and deceitful plausibility. It is not in the mere statement of their opinions that our opponents feel the difficulties of their tenets: for this is so specious, and so *apparently* in accordance with some passages of the New Testament, that the generality of readers are liable to be misled by what, on a closer and deeper investigation, will be found to give no support whatever to those erroneous notions, in proof of which they are advanced by those who reject the baptism of infants. It is for this reason that I have been induced to endeavour, in the first place, to remove those difficulties, which are apt to embarrass such persons as have not carefully considered the arguments of the Antipædobaptist.

---

THE principal objections, which have been alleged against the baptism of infants are these:

I. That it is an unreasonable practice, because infants are not capable of knowing any thing of the covenant into which they are to be admitted by it.

II. That it is contrary to the Institution of our Saviour, which, requiring instruction before baptism, thereby excludes infants, because they are not capable of instruction.

III. That it is an unwarrantable and unlawful practice, since there is no *precept* for it in the Scriptures.

IV. That there is no mention made of any such practice among the Apostles, or in the primitive times.

These objections I will now proceed to answer in the order in which they are stated.

---

I.—*It is objected, that Infant Baptism is an unreasonable practice, because Infants are not capable of knowing any thing of the Covenant into which they are to be admitted by it.*

In answer to this objection I observe, that it is not inconsistent either with the reason or practice of mankind that infants should be bound by covenants to the future performance of conditions, which they at present know nothing of, nor are capable of performing until they grow up. This

is common among men, and is practised almost every day. Every will, and every conditional settlement of an estate on heirs is a covenant, and every contract that a guardian makes for a minor in infancy, is made in that infant's name, and he is bound by it, and really enjoys the benefit of it, in expectation of the future performance of the conditions by him; and baptism is the seal of a covenant between God and man. Why, then, should it be thought strange or incredible that God should thus deal with us in a covenant of grace and mercy?

Moreover, if the incapacity of infants were in the nature of things *an insuperable bar*, it must be an universal and indispensable one, and must exclude infants from all covenants with God, of whatever kind they may be, whether of works or of grace; whether by the law, or by the gospel. For what arises absolutely from the nature of things must be universal and perpetual, and must always have the same influence.

But that the incapacity of infants is not an universal and perpetual bar to all covenants, the Antipædobaptists themselves will, I hope, allow; since infants were admitted into a covenant with God, under the patriarchal and Mosaical dispensations. If then God is pleased, in his infinite

wisdom, to admit infants into a covenant under the Law, He may do so, if he will, under the Gospel; and if the Almighty may do so, it is neither improper, nor unreasonable, nor, in the nature of things, absurd. The difference in the conditions or substance of the covenant, makes nothing in the case. And where the whole stress of the objection lies in the natural incapacity of the subject, it must have as much force in the one case as in the other. If it be said that God may admit them, but does not, this is running before hand to a new objection, which shall be considered in its proper place. The only thing now in debate, is—whether the natural incapacity of infants be of itself a necessary bar; if it be, it must be an universal obstacle to all covenants whatsoever, as I have before remarked; but, we plainly see that it is not an universal obstacle, because God has admitted infants into covenant with him, and has bound them to the performance of conditions by that covenant. This objection, therefore, is of no force, because it does not necessarily conclude.

If, then, the incapacity of infants is not in the nature of things a necessary and universal bar to all covenants in general, let us inquire, in the next place, whether there be any thing peculiar to the Christian covenant which necessarily excludes them; and this leads me to the second objection.

*II.—That Infant Baptism is contrary to the Institution of our Saviour, which, requiring Instruction before Baptism, thereby excludes Infants, because they are not capable of Instruction.*

The Antipædobaptists maintain that the Apostles were to make disciples by instruction, before they were to baptize them. Matt. xxviii. 19. *To teach all nations, and [then] baptize them.* And Mark xvi. 15, 16. *He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved.* This, say our opponents, is the great charter of the Gospel, which, by making instruction and faith necessary qualifications for all that are to be baptized, effectually excludes all those who can have neither faith nor instruction.

I answer, in this commission, our Lord had a more peculiar regard to the persons to whom the Apostles were first and more immediately sent ; who were, indeed, men and women ; and therefore he mentions such qualifications, antecedently to baptism, as in reason and the nature of things were indispensably necessary, considering the state of the world at that time. Men were almost universally abandoned to idolatry, ignorance, superstition, profaneness, and other great iniquities ; and in these circumstances

it was not fit that they should be admitted into a covenant of grace and reconciliation with God. They were, therefore, first to be instructed and reclaimed, before they could be baptized. And this is the great work to which the Apostles are here commissioned. Now if, from this, the Antipædo-baptists infer that none ought to be baptized but those only who are thus previously instructed, I must beg leave to ask, how they can reconcile their belief of the salvation of infants with these texts? For they as much exclude infants from salvation, as from baptism. I am not now inquiring how infants shall be saved; since, in answer to that, my opponents will say,—*secret things belong to God*: but I am putting to them this plain and obvious question—how can they, who believe and confess that infants may and shall be saved, reconcile that opinion with these texts, and particularly with that of St. Mark, which, by the same consequence, proves that infants cannot be saved, as strongly as that they may not be baptized? For, observe the argument: Christ says, (Matt. xxviii. 19.) *Go, make disciples of all nations, and baptize them*: and, (Mark xvi. 15, 16) *Preach the Gospel to every creature, he that believeth and is baptized shall be saved, and he that believeth not, shall be damned*: from whence our opponents argue thus; none are to be baptized but those who are first made disciples by believing;

but infants are not capable of believing ; therefore they ought not to be baptized. Now, in the very same manner, from the very same words, any man may argue thus,—That infants shall not be saved : *He that believeth not* (says our Lord) *shall be damned* : all infants are incapable of believing ; therefore, all infants must be damned. This is precisely the same way of reasoning. How will the Antipædobaptists answer this ? Will they stand to the dreadful inference, that no infant shall be saved ? If not, they must maintain the same opinion as we do concerning these texts ; that they are improperly and impertinently alleged in the case of infants ; because they were never intended by our Saviour to extend to them. Otherwise, they will as certainly conclude against the salvation, as against the baptism of infants ; inasmuch as faith and repentance are as necessary for the one, as for the other.

The case, then, is briefly this : men and women were first of all to be made disciples by instruction ; the case of infants was distinct, to be considered afterwards, when their parents were converted ; and though faith and repentance were necessary for the parents before baptism, this does not prove that their infants were to be excluded from the sacrament, because they could not actually believe.

The third objection is,

III. *That it is an unwarrantable and unlawful practice to baptize Infants, because there is neither precept nor authority for it in the New Testament.*

This is the great sheet anchor of the Antipædobaptists, upon which they place the firmest reliance. For when we demonstrate, by God's own command and authority, that the natural incapacity of infants is no necessary bar to exclude them from the seal of the covenant, they reply, All this is nothing to the purpose, because there was an express and positive command for circumcising infants, but there is none at all for baptizing them. And when we argue that faith and repentance are made as necessary for salvation as they are for baptism, and, consequently, no more exclude infants from this sacrament than from salvation; they plead, that though infants are capable of, and within the covenant of grace, yet they ought not to be baptized, because it is no where commanded—in Christianity, nothing is to be done without the express authority of the word of God.

In answer to this I reply,—

*First*—That this argument may easily be retorted ; the baptism of infants, say our opponents, is no Gospel ordinance ; it is not commanded ; and therefore it is unlawful. I reply, that it is nowhere forbidden, and therefore it is not unlawful. And this argument of *no prohibition* is of more force here than is generally supposed ; for this reason—God, in both the former covenants with Abraham and Moses, expressly commanded that infants should be admitted and sealed by the sacrament of circumcision ; when, therefore, he changed the ordinance, and instituted baptism as the seal of his covenant under the Christian dispensation, it was proper to declare, that infants, who were fit subjects to receive the seal of it before, must henceforth be excluded. This argument is, I think, invincible ; the admitted fact, *that God gave no express prohibition to do that which had always been done since the covenant with Abraham*, vindicates the lawfulness of continuing to take infants into the covenant, and shews that it was God's pleasure that they should still have the seal of the covenant as they had before ; for, if ever a prohibition was to be expected to declare a thing unlawful, it was here, to abolish a practice that had been so long established, as that of admitting infants into the covenant.

*Secondly*—We have the authority of God

for this practice ; this I prove in the following manner :—

Baptism is now the seal of that very covenant which was once sealed by circumcision ; infants were, by God's command, admitted then ; therefore, they must not be excluded now. Or thus : God admitted infants into a covenant of grace and salvation through Jesus Christ, and upon the conditions of faith and obedience in that covenant made with Abraham, and confirmed by the seal of circumcision ;

Baptism of infants admits them into the same covenant upon the same conditions, and as a seal confirms that covenant to them ;

Therefore, in baptizing infants, we act by God's own authority and example ; for we do no more in baptizing them than, by the Almighty's own ordinance, was done in circumcising them. The rite, indeed, is changed ; it was formerly circumcision ; it is now baptism : but what then ? The use of both these rites is still the same ; the one is a seal of the covenant of God, and so is the other a seal of the same covenant.

But to this argument it has been objected—

1. That what was done in Abraham's time, was done in the minority of the Church, when things were obscurely represented; but that now we have clear light, and in that respect are under a better dispensation, there is not the same reason for admitting infants as there was then. All the force of the objection lies in the different degrees of revelation that have been made to Abraham and to us; and this, I readily acknowledge, is strictly true: that which God intended in the covenant with Abraham was but obscurely set forth, and the particulars both of faith and practice, and also of our reward and happiness, are more fully and clearly brought to light by Jesus Christ. When, therefore, I affirmed that our covenant is the same as that made with Abraham and his seed, I spoke of *generals* and not of *particulars*; and my meaning was, that faith and obedience were required in Abraham's covenant as well as they are from us. Not but that the particular articles of that faith, and the particular duties of that obedience also, are now more fully discovered and set in a clearer light. But I cannot see how this makes any difference either as to the capacity or to the right of admission to this sacrament; because, infants being equally insensible of both, cannot be less capable of one than of the other.

2. It is urged by our opponents that there was an express command for the circumcising of infants, but there is none for baptizing them.

To this I answer,—1. There was not the same necessity for such a command. There was an absolute necessity for expressly commanding infants to be circumcised, because there was nothing antecedent to that institution that could give light or knowledge to direct men concerning it. But there was no such necessity for an express precept for baptizing infants; since this might be learned from the authority of God in the previous institution, under Abraham: for they were certainly as fit subjects of the one as of the other; the conditions being the same: and if they were as fit subjects of the *covenant*, surely they are equally fit to receive the *seal* of it.

This, I am inclined to think, was the first ground of baptizing infants among Christians. When the Apostles began to preach the Gospel, and especially to the Jews, the substance of their preaching was, that what God had long before declared by Abraham and the prophets, he had now fulfilled and accomplished by Jesus Christ. From whence they were to learn, that his Gospel was no new thing, but that which had been long declared and prophesied in old time. The cove-

nant was the same ; the religion was the same ; only brought into a clearer light, by a more perfect revelation. This was the sum and substance of St. Peter's sermon, <sup>1</sup> *Those things that God before had shone by the mouth of all his prophets, that Christ should suffer, he hath so fulfilled.* And <sup>2</sup> *Ye are the children of the prophets, and of the covenant which God made with our fathers, saying unto Abraham, And in thy seed shall all the nations of the earth be blessed.* And for this reason St. Paul says, <sup>3</sup> *Christ Jesus was a ministers of the circumcision for the truth of God, to confirm the promises made unto the fathers.* This was the common subject of the preaching of the Apostles ; and those who were convinced by it, and prevailed on to believe, were immediately admitted into the Christian covenant by baptism. Here, indeed, is no express mention made of infants, because there was no occasion for it ; their own reason and understanding were sufficient to convince them that what God had authorized and commanded from the beginning, was a proper example for them to imitate ; and consequently that, when circumcision was abolished as the seal of God's covenant, and baptism was instituted in its stead, there was now the same reason for baptizing infants, as there had been hitherto for circumcising them.

<sup>1</sup> Acts iii. 18.

<sup>2</sup> ib. 25.

<sup>3</sup> Rom. xv. 8.

And what they were sufficiently instructed in by the authority of a divine precept and command in the Old Testament, was not absolutely necessary to be repeated in the New. For to what purpose should there be a particular revelation to discover that which men might be sufficiently convinced of without one ? Moreover,

2. The baptism of infants is founded on God's word, inasmuch as, though there be no precept or command for baptizing, in which infants are, *totidem verbis*, expressed, yet there is such a precept and command in which infants are certainly included. And this I prove in the following manner;

1. From St. Peter's words, *\*Repent and be baptized that your sins may be blotted out, for the promise is to you and your children.* In these words, children are implied at least as entitled both to the promises of the covenant, and to the sacrament that confirms it. I am aware that some slight this argument, and think it absurd to mention it, because men and women are called *children* in Scripture ; as the *children of Israel* are often spoken of, where infants are not intended, but only men of the posterity of *Jacob*. But, though it be true that the word *children* may import no more

<sup>\*</sup> Acts ii. 38.

than *posterity*, yet the promise here spoken of is that very covenant into which infants were commanded to be admitted. So that if the promise which God made with Abraham and his children included infants, this promise made to Christians and their children will, by the same authority, include infants also; for the promise is still the same.

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The fourth and last objection is,

*IV.—That there is no mention made of any such practice among the Apostles, or in the primitive times.*

I must here observe, that the state of the question is now changed from matter of law to matter of fact; and we are now only to inquire what discoveries we can find of such a practice in the time of the Apostles. To this objection, therefore, I answer—

1. That though it were true that there is no mention made in Scripture of such a practice, yet this would not at all prove that there was no such thing in use, and especially when it is found not contrary to the laws of God. For we are no more

to expect an express, clear, and distinct account of all apostolical practices from the New Testament, than we are to expect a perfect history of the first ages of the world from the first five chapters of Genesis.

2. Though we have no declaration in express words that infants were baptized in the time of the Apostles, yet, from one expression of St. Paul, such a practice may reasonably be concluded. He speaks of the *holiness* of infants in such terms as clearly imply that those infants were admitted to baptism. The passage is 1 Cor. vii. 14, where, giving his determination respecting those Christians who were married to unbelievers, he contends for their continuance in the connubial bond by this argument: *For the unbelieving husband is sanctified by the wife, (she being a believer,) and the unbelieving wife is sanctified by the husband ; else were your children unclean, but now are they holy.* In which words, the Apostle founds his determination on this known and received opinion—that the children of Christian parents, and so also if but one parent were Christian, are holy. That infant children are here meant is plain from this, that St. Paul speaks of such whose holiness depended on the sanctification of the believing parent ; which must respect infants only ; because the holiness of adult

persons must be only from their own actual profession of faith.

I shall say nothing here of the evidence which we derive in support of Infant Baptism from the writings of the early fathers of the Christian Church, as my sole design in these preliminary remarks, is to give to the reader a summary view of the state of the case, as far as regards the testimony of Scripture, which the Antipædobaptists exult in as decisive of the question; and which many sincere inquirers may deem embarrassing, from an inability to detect and expose the sophistry, by which they are made by our opponents to serve a cause, which, when rightly understood, they obviously discountenance. The reader is therefore earnestly requested to obtain and bear in his remembrance a clear and distinct view of the evidence given above, before he proceeds to the following observations, in which whatever has been taken for granted, or is too concisely stated, above, will be found amply and satisfactorily proved and enlarged upon.

[I wish it to be understood that, in the following pages, I shall use the words ANTIPÆDOBAPTISTS and BAPTISTS indifferently, to signify *those who reject the Baptism of Infants*. I do this in conformity with the practice of the generality of writers on this subject.]



## ON INFANT BAPTISM.

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### CHAPTER I.

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*Infants proved to be fit subjects of Baptism, from our Lord's rebuke of those who forbade them "to come to him," and from several other passages of the New Testament.*

MARK x. 13—17.—“They brought young children to Christ, that he should touch them; and his disciples rebuked those that brought them. But when Jesus saw it, he was much displeased, and said unto them, suffer the little children to come unto me, and forbid them not; for of such is the kingdom of God. Verily I say unto you, whosoever shall not receive the kingdom of God as a little child, he shall not enter therein. And he took them up in his arms, put his hands upon them, and blessed them.”

The strength of the argument which may be drawn in favour of Infant Baptism from the above

passage is so great and decisive, that the compilers of our Liturgy have inserted it in the office for the Baptism of Infants, and have commented upon it in the following terms :

“ Ye hear in this Gospel the words of our Saviour Christ, that he commanded the children to be brought unto him, how he blamed those that would have kept them from him, how he exhorteth all men to follow their innocency. Ye perceive how, by his outward gesture and deed, he declared his good will toward them, for he embraced them in his arms, he laid his hands upon them, and blessed them.”

I shall begin with the above passage of Scripture, because it is best known, it being adopted by our Church as a strong reason for Pædobaptism, and because, in expatiating upon it, and in shewing its connexion with the practice for which I am now contending, I shall be enabled to introduce to the notice of the reader some important observations, which will greatly facilitate his conception of the arguments which are to follow: moreover, in answering the objections of our opponents to this specific point of the question, I shall have a favourable opportunity of removing some of those difficulties, which are apt to perplex such persons as have not been particularly induced to investigate this subject.

The first objection which the Baptists urge

against the argument which we deduce from this passage is, that the parents of the infants here spoken of were *not* believers.

Now I think they *were* believers; and this I infer from their conduct: they bring their infants to our Lord to receive his blessing: this argues their conviction of His divine character. He offers himself to the Jews as their expected Messiah; some believed in him, and many rejected him: is it conceivable, that any who questioned the truth of his pretensions and his miracles, would bring their children to receive the benediction of a person whom they regarded as an impostor? The very act of presenting their children to our Lord to receive the imposition of his hands and the benediction of his lips, is a most affecting and decisive proof that they were firmly convinced that he was the Messiah, and therefore, in the strictest sense of the word, they were *believers*.

The next point which our opponents challenge us to prove is, that the children above spoken of were *infants*. And here the pertinacity of our opponents compels me to trespass upon the reader's attention while I indulge in a few etymological criticisms. The word here rendered *little children* is, in the original Greek, the diminutive from  $\pi\alpha\imath\varsigma$ , which signifies *a child*. That they are really infants who are here spoken of, we may also infer from the expression employed in St. Matthew's

Gospel, when the wise men of the East first found our Saviour,—“ They saw” (*το παιδίον*) “ the young child,” then unquestionably *an infant*.

It is objected in the third place, that the words “ suffer the little children to come unto me,” are to be understood exclusively of those who were then brought to Christ. This interpretation of the passage is directly contradicted by the expressions of St. Luke, who, in his account of this manifestation of our Lord’s peculiar regard for little children, whom he here expressly calls *infants*, says, “ But Jesus (*προσ καλεσαμένος αὐτα*) “ *after having called them*,” (quum pueros advo-  
casset, as Beza has it,) “ said, suffer little children to come unto me.” Now to make our Saviour’s words properly applicable to these individual infants, is to render his gracious command perfectly needless; for what necessity is there for bidding his disciples to suffer those to come unto him, who were already with him? Supposing, even, that Christ had simply called them, and that they had not yet been presented to him, who can imagine that it was necessary to give any further direction to his disciples to suffer those to come unto him whom he had but just then called to him? It is therefore of infants in general, and not of those particular infants only, that he spake. “ If,” says Bishop Taylor, “ we regard the precept, it cannot be supposed to expire in the persons of those little

ones which were then brought, *for they were come already*, and though they were tacitly reproved who offered to hinder them, yet the children were present ; and therefore it must relate to others, to all infants, that they should for ever be brought to Christ. And this is also to be gathered from *τοις των*, (of such,) not *ταῖς των*, (of these;) for these are but a few, but the kingdom of God is of such as these who are now brought ; children make up a great portion of it, and the other portion is made up by such who become like to these. And if the transcript belong to the kingdom, it were strange if the exemplar should not : if none can enter but they who are like children, it must be certain that nothing can hinder the children. And lastly, if we regard the doctrine which Christ established upon this action, it will finish the argument into a certain conclusion ; ‘ Whosoever shall not receive the kingdom of God as a little child, shall not enter therein ;’ receive it as a little child *receives it*, that is, with innocence and without any let or hinderance.”

True it is, that the first interpretation of the words *coming to him* signifies by way of bodily approach, whilst he was corporeally present on earth ; and so, indeed, these infants might and did come to him : but how was their being such as the kingdom of God consisted of, a reason for their being suffered to come ? For, if there were

any force in that reason, then, by the same argument, none but such as the kingdom of God consisted of should have been suffered to come to Christ. But this is as contrary to practice as it is to reason. It is contrary to practice, since there were suffered to come to him such as the kingdom of God ought not to consist of; those, for example, who sought our Lord's death and destruction. And it is contrary to reason also; for, how should our Saviour by his preaching have converted such as were not of his kingdom, considered according to their present state, if they might not have been suffered to come to him? Nor can it mean a declaration of a capacity for glory; since how could the disciples, or men, or even demons, prevent them from coming there, if they belonged to that kingdom?

Now then, I appeal to common reason whether or no there is not here that which the Antipædo-baptists so strenuously demand,—viz. a fair and clear scriptural ground for Infant Baptism. If children may come to Christ, and must, by the command of Christ, be suffered thus to approach him, and there be no other way that we are acquainted with of coming to him but by baptism; what can be more plain than that, in enjoining that they should be permitted to come to him, he commanded that they should be suffered to be baptized, and forbade that they should be

hindered from baptism ? And since it is only in his sacraments and ordinances our Saviour is now present with us, what way have we to bring our children to him, as he has directed, but by baptism to offer and dedicate them to him ?

Some Baptist writers contend that these infants were brought to Christ to be healed by him ! “ That they were not brought to be healed of any diseases,” says Gale\*, “ cannot easily be granted : for though it is not expressly said they were, yet since it was the Lord’s custom frequently to heal by laying on his hands, it is probable enough this was the design of those who brought them to him, though it is only said they brought them to have his hands laid on them.” Now if the infants were brought to be healed, can we suppose that the disciples would have had the heart to forbid them ? Such conduct in them would argue both great inhumanity to the little children, and unwarrantable irreverence to their Master. The inhumanity which this interpretation implies is too obvious to need further proof. And can any thing be imagined more arrogant and disrespectful, than for the disciples officiously to interpose, for the purpose of preventing the miraculous agency of their Lord in a case of such an affecting nature

\* Reflections on Mr. Wall’s History of Infant Baptism.  
London, 1711, p. 431.

as this, where anxious parents are bringing forward their afflicted babes to be healed by the most benevolent of beings—to hinder him from performing an act, which would at once do good to man by healing the infirmities of the body, and bring glory to God by working a beneficent miracle for the confirmation of his own Divine character, which constituted the grand object of his ministry! That the conduct of the disciples was highly culpable is plain from the words of the Evangelist, who says that our blessed Saviour was “*much displeased*” with them; but it highly behoves the Baptists to remark, that the behaviour which our Lord thus severely rebuked in them was not that which they impute to them, but the very spirit which the Baptists themselves manifest in forbidding little children to become proselytes to Christ. How necessary is it for such to remember, that, except they become as little children, they shall not enter into the kingdom of heaven! Our Lord says, that infants, and only such as are like them, are fit for the kingdom of God; but the Baptists do not think them fit to be made members of the Church, into which there is but one way of admission,—that is, by baptism.

We have also another clear and plain command for the baptizing of infants, in Matt. xxviii. 19. *Go ye, therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son,*

*and of the Holy Ghost.* This was our Lord's last commission and order for the administering of this Sacrament, and was delivered to the Apostles after his resurrection, before his ascension into heaven ; it is intended to tell them in general who may be baptized, and in what form this may be done. It informs them, they might administer this rite to the people of any nation of the world, and that they must do it, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost.

I would here observe, that the word above rendered *teach* is unhappily translated in our Version ; for it is of a much more extensive signification, and includes what is meant in the following part of the commission by Baptizing and Teaching. The word, in short, signifies *proselytize*, and the impropriety of rendering it by the term *teach* will be manifest to any reader who will take the trouble to read the 20th verse after the above passage : thus—" Go ye, therefore, and *teach* all nations ..... *teaching* them" ! The most careless reader must see that either the verb or the participle is erroneously translated, since the passage, as it now stands, is totally destitute of sense and meaning : while with the correction I have ventured to suggest, the whole is made plain and consistent. *Go ye, therefore, and proselytize all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father,*

*and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost, teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you.*

This is a great subject of cavil among the Baptists. Their strenuous and learned defender, Gale, in commenting upon this word *μαθητευω*, most pertinaciously insists, that it always signifies *to teach*, (p. 287.) “*To teach, instruct, &c. all nations,*” says he, “*is good sense, but to be disciples* all nations is nonsense, and cannot be the meaning of Infinite Wisdom.” Here the learned writer deals with a most impolitic dishonesty, which proves nothing but the weakness of the cause of him who uses it. No Pædobaptist, in his senses, ever said that *μαθητευω* means *to be disciples*, nor are we so ready to adopt a signification which would render the whole passage dark nonsense. But it would not have suited this author’s purpose to quote his opponents fairly; and as he has chosen to misrepresent them, his friends are welcome to all the advantages they can claim from his ingenuity. The word, we maintain, signifies *to make disciples*: the word *teach* seems to have been adopted by our translators because they wished to avoid a periphrasis, and this, I humbly think, they might have done by employing the word *proselytize*.

In treating upon this part of our subject, it is amusing to see how Dr. Gale begs the question on

the subject of our Lord's commission. "If," says he, (p. 251) "it does not speak of and enjoin teaching infants, it does not enjoin baptizing them; for if the term *all nations* comprehends infants, then they must be taught too, which is absurd; and if it can't comprehend infants, then they must not be baptized: one of these things is unavoidable." Thus, we see, the Doctor takes it for granted that all who are baptized must be previously taught. "Before baptism," he says, in another place (p. 310), "they are to be taught the truth of the Gospel, especially matters of faith; but after baptism, they are to be instructed in the Christian morals, and what concerns their practice." The Doctor has laboured hard to prove that *discipleship* necessarily presupposes, or includes, teaching, and, with this view, he has furnished us with a long muster-roll of critics, who take διδασκεῖν in this sense. But this will not do: surely no unprejudiced mind can be brought to believe that these critics must thence infer the unlawfulness of infant baptism—men who held the very principles the Doctor condemns! This, then, is the Baptist's argument: Because *adults* were not to be baptized until they were instructed; therefore, their infants were not to be *baptized*!

Now the commission respects *adults* only, and in its primary view only *adult GENTILES* (*πάντα εθνη*). As if our Lord had said, "Hitherto, during

my life and abode with you on earth, your ministry has been confined to the Jews ; I now enlarge your commission, and command you to convert the GENTILES also." If it were our Lord's intention to exclude infants, here was a time which imperiously required an intimation to this effect ; for I will fearlessly leave the question to be decided by any fair unprejudiced person, (who understands the Jewish dispensation, and bears in mind that the Apostles had been Jews,) whether, when our Lord had given this commission to them, they must not have inevitably understood his commission to include the infants of those who should embrace the Christian faith ? We have decisive scriptural evidence that they continued to circumcise their children, that they practised the other rites of the Mosaic law, and acted and spoke and thought as Jews, after their conversion to the faith of Christ. We know that according to the precepts of the Old Testament Scriptures, they were bound to regard and treat their children as disciples of Moses ; and now that they were brought to a real belief of what Moses and the prophets testified, shall we suppose—contrary to attested fact, and contrary to the reason of the thing—that they cast off subjection to the authority of those precepts ? Made acquainted now with that long-predicted Messiah, who *was a minister of the circumcision to confirm the promises*

*made unto the fathers*, in bringing up their children as disciples of Moses, they would necessarily bring them up as disciples of Christ. In fact, as our Lord said to Nicodemus, when he expressed his astonishment at the doctrine of regeneration—" Art thou a master in Israel, and knowest not these things ?" So, if the Apostles had said any thing to our Lord about Infant Baptism, (as they surely did not) he might, *a fortiori*, have said to them—" *Are ye Jews, and know not these things ?*" Do ye, who have known that, from the commencement of the Abrahamic covenant, God has taken infants into the Church, ask now whether he is going to exclude them !!

Another argument against Infant Baptism is, that the Apostles never baptized infants. But to render this objection valid, it must first be shewn that nations have ever existed without children, since it is expressly declared that the Apostles baptized whole families, particularly the household of Stephanus, and others, of which mention is made in the New Testament. Amongst these, it may reasonably be presumed, there were some minors, if not babes and sucklings. In confirmation of these facts, Origen says—" The Church has received it by tradition from the Apostles, to baptize little children."\* And Calvin observes

\* Pro hoc Ecclesia ab Apostolis traditionem accepit, etiam parvulis baptismum dare. In Rom. 6 tom. 2. p.543.

on this subject that “there is no writer so ancient as not to refer its origin to the apostolic age.”\*

Now, had the primitive Christians regarded Infant Baptism as unlawful, for want either of scriptural command for it or example of it, how easy and how unanswerable an argument would have been ready at hand for the employment of any individual who had been urged to an early baptism of his children. He would have urged that “Christ never commanded any such thing as Infant Baptism ; that the Apostles never practised any such thing : there is neither precept for it, nor example of it, in Holy Scripture : and therefore it is unlawful, and we dare not do it.” And yet we find nothing of all this, it being evident that had our Saviour intended that his disciples, in baptizing nations, should not baptize infants, he would have said so. Thus then, although it would be unreasonable to carry infants to God by baptism, without any direction from him ; it is perfectly in accordance with reason to understand infants to be comprehended in this duty, when no other way of bringing them to Christ has been pointed out.

There is the same need of children coming to Christ now, as then, and it may safely be said,

\* Nullus est Scriptor tam vetustus, qui non ejus originem ad apostolorum sæculum pro certo referat. 4 Instit. cap. 16. § 8.

too, that there is the same mercy in him now as then. By this coming is meant not that they should come to Christ *corporeally*, but *figuratively*, as a disciple,\* ελθειν προς, i. e. προσελυτος. If it should be asked by which way children may become Christ's disciples ? I answer, by being baptized in his name, and with his baptism.

But to return to Dr. Gale.

The fallacy, then, that runs clean through Dr. Gale's book, like a thread, is this : that every thing concerning baptism that refers only to *adults*, plainly shews that infants may not and must not be baptized ; and his numerous quotations from the critics, (who, by the way, are all Pædobaptists,) to shew that the commission, which certainly respects adults, implies *teaching* before baptism, are given with the most insidious and sophistical view of impressing the readers with the notion that they must admit that whenever infants are not named, they are invariably excluded. But I am clearly of opinion that, inasmuch as the Jews, before the coming of Christ, were the Church of God, and infants were, by his merciful command, admitted as members of that Church, (as I shall prove very shortly,) it lies upon our opponents to shew when and where they were excluded under the Christian dispensation.

\* See Mat. xi. 28 ; and John, iii. 26, & v. 40.

"As only they who have heard," says Dr. Gale, p. 416, "and are capable of understanding, can ever be willing to submit themselves to this ordinance of baptism, so neither can any others be saved by it—since the saving efficacy does not consist in the external washing, infants, who are capable only of that, cannot be saved by baptism, nor reap any benefit by it." As well might the Doctor have said, although God commanded that infants of eight days old should be circumcised, yet there was no obligation to do so. With regard to the *external washing*, we do not say that this ablution, *per se*, saves them, but the rite in obedience to a Divine command. Is baptism *to be administered* to those only who rightly receive it? That it avails those only, we admit; but that no others can receive it, we deny.

This was the very reason why the disciples rebuked those who brought their children to Christ, because they were little, not fit to be instructed, and therefore not fit that Christ should be troubled with them. This Christ rebukes in them, and tells them that the littleness of children is no argument why they should be kept from him. "Suffer them," said he, "to come unto me, and forbid them not, for of such is the kingdom of heaven." And what kind of argument had this been, if the text should be interpreted as the Baptists would have it? Suffer little children to

come unto me that I may touch them, that I may take them up in my arms, put my hands upon them and bless them, because the kingdom of God belongs to those who have such-like qualities, who resemble children in some select properties. But, on the very same ground, if any had brought doves and sheep to Christ to put his hands upon them and bless them, the disciples would have been liable to the same reproof, because of such is the kingdom of God. Such as are partakers of the kingdom of God must be endued with such properties. Besides, what one thing can be named belonging to the initiation and being of a Christian, whereof baptism is the seal, which infants are not capable of, as well as grown men? They are capable of receiving the Holy Ghost, of union with Christ, of adoption, of forgiveness of sins, of regeneration, of everlasting life—all of which things are signified and sealed in the sacrament of baptism. And it is further to be considered that, in the working of that inward grace, of which baptism is the sign and seal, all who partake of that grace are but mere patients, and contribute no more to it than a child to its own existence. Therefore it is that infants are as fit subjects to have it wrought in them, as grown men. Nor are the most grown men better qualified to receive this grace, when it is given them in respect either of any faith or repentance which they yet have,

than a very little child: it being the primary intention, in the covenant of grace, in its first work, to shew what free grace can and will do to miserable nothing, to cut miserable man off from the wild olive, and graft him into the true olive; to take away the heart of stone, to create in them a heart of flesh, to forgive their iniquities, and to love them freely. What does the most grown man, in any of these, more than an infant may do, being only passive in them all?\*

It is nowhere said that unbelievers, or rather *non-believers*, may not be baptized. It is said, indeed, “He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved.” And it is said, “He that believeth with all his heart may be baptized;” but it is nowhere said he that believeth *not*, shall not be baptized: therefore, I deny the consequence if all believers must be baptized, then no unbeliever or *non-believer* may be baptized. These two are not placed here in the way of opposition. Christ excludes infants neither from baptism nor from salvation for want of faith; but positive unbelievers, and such as refuse the Gospel, he excludes from both. If it had been necessary to ascertain the previous existence of real faith in the candidate for baptism, the Apostles sinned in baptizing Simon Magus, Alexander, Hymenæus, Philetus, Ananias and

\* See the XIII<sup>th</sup> Article of Religion.

Sapphira, with others. In quoting the words of St. Philip's address to the Ethiopian nobleman—“ If thou believest with all thine heart, thou may'st be baptized,” Dr. Gale has added (p. 320) “ and not else, though you desire it ever so much.” Now Dr. Gale ought to have been careful not to add to the word of God: the conclusion of St. Philip's address, as given by Dr. Gale, is nowhere to be found in Scripture, and can by no just consequence be inferred.

The Evangelist, you must observe, says to the nobleman, *If thou believest with all thine heart, thou may'st be baptized*: this does not imply, that none may be baptized but those that believe: all that can be inferred from it is, that none may be baptized without profession of faith who are capable of making such a profession. It may be concluded from this, that if any person lives to years of understanding unbaptized, or a stranger to the Christian religion, he must receive some instructions concerning it, and make profession of some faith, or engage to learn, profess, and obey, or he may not be baptized. But this is not the matter disputed: this we maintain as well as they. The question is, whether or not none may be baptized but such as are capable of doing so, and *that* this passage of Scripture does not prove, nor any other. It proves, that grown persons may not be baptized without actual pro-

fession of faith, but not that infants may not be baptized without actual faith, and the profession of it.

Our opponents urge this objection also from another passage, which is in Mark, xviii. 16, where our Saviour, after he had given the Apostles commission to disperse themselves in the world, and preach the Gospel to all nations, says, *He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved, but he that believeth not shall be damned.* From hence they argue thus:—Is not believing here set before baptizing? He does not say, He that is baptized and believes, but, He that believes and is baptized shall be saved; from whence they infer that believing must go before baptizing, and that none may be baptized but those who first believe. But to shew them that they misunderstand and misapply this passage, I would observe to them, that as our Saviour here sets believing before baptism, so he sets believing and being baptized before being saved: and then if none must be baptized, according to their interpretation of this passage, but he that believes, because believing is set before baptism; then none can be saved that do not first believe and are baptized, because both are set before salvation. And thus they are forced, against their will, to interpret this text so as to make it prove baptism to be necessary to infants for salvation, and then, I am sure, they must be baptized.

Again, I would desire them to observe in the verse in question, that our Saviour sets believing and being baptized before salvation, as things required in order to salvation ; but he does not set believing before being baptized, as what is required in order to baptism. He says, “ He that believes and is baptized shall be saved,” but he does not say, “ He that believes shall be baptized :” he does not say this, which might have been understood to have made believing requisite to baptism; much less does he say, “ He that believes not shall not be baptized,” which is their opinion : this, therefore, is not an express text for their opinion, nor can it be inferred from it.

The Holy Scriptures, both of the Old and New Testament, make faith and obedience the conditions on man’s part of the covenant, which is the scheme of salvation, and has unalterably continued so since the fall of man, though there were some ritual and ceremonial additions to it under the law of Moses, which, since the coming of Christ, have been abrogated. But the Holy Scriptures do not make faith and obedience the conditions to be actually performed by all, in order to their *entering* into that covenant, as every reader of the Old Testament is aware.

The baptists exult greatly when they produce it as a conclusive argument against the baptizing

of infants, that we have no mention in all the New Testament of any one infant that was baptized by Christ or his Apostles, or by their direction. Upon the strength of this, they will not believe that any were baptized by them, or in their time ; and from thence they infer, that it was not commanded nor allowed by our Saviour, and therefore ought not to be practised.

I shall now endeavour to point out to the reader the answers this objection is capable of, by which I flatter myself the weakness and falsehood of it will be made manifest.

In the first place, then, this is but an argument by consequence against the baptizing of infants, which it does not become those to use, who contend we must have express Scripture only for our rule. And it is a forced and strained consequence to conclude, that this was not done because it is not particularly mentioned, and therefore might not be done. It is not reasonable to draw such a consequence from this, that the baptizing of any infant is not mentioned expressly, unless they can produce a declaration in so many words, that all the Apostles did in the discharge of their office is particularly related ; but that they cannot do. And if this declaration be nowhere discoverable in the New Testament, then there might be several things done by the Apostles which are not

recorded, and this might be one. No argument, therefore, can be framed from hence, because it might have been done, though it is not related.

Besides all this, an objection of this sort condemns our opponents also: For, if we may do nothing in the worship of God but what we have express precept for, or what is said in the New Testament was done by Christ or his Apostles, they themselves are condemned in some things which they do, by this principle. And they are certainly in an error, either in their practice, or in the principle and argument which condemns their practice. They are themselves condemned by this argument in these two things: viz.—

1. In that they defer the baptizing of the infants of baptized parents till they are grown up; and—2. In that they plunge those whom they baptize wholly under water. Now, of neither of these have they one precedent or example in any part of the New Testament. They cannot name any one person whose baptism was deferred, in the time of the Apostles, from his infancy, and administered when he was grown to years of understanding, though his parents were believers and baptized Christians at the time of his infancy. It must be observed, they are greatly deceived when they are made to believe, that our Saviour himself is a precedent of this, because the Virgin Mary, his mother, was a believer in his infancy.

For it must be said, our Saviour did not put off his baptism by St. John till he was of grown years, when he might have had it sooner; for, indeed, he was at grown years himself before John began his baptism. Besides, it is to be observed, that the question we are disputing is, whether or not there is any one precedent of a person, whose baptism was put off from the time of his infancy, and administered to him when he had come to years of understanding, though his parents were believers in Christ, and baptized with his baptism at the time of that person's infancy; and certainly they will not say, that the Virgin Mary was baptized with Christ's baptism, while Christ himself was an infant, that is, before either his preaching had commenced, or his baptism had been instituted. This, then, is no precedent or example of what they insist upon and practise, that is, of the deferring to baptize the infants of parents baptized with Christ's baptism until they had arrived at maturity; and of this they have no one precedent in all the New Testament. And this is the more remarkable, because the space of time which is taken in within the reach of the history of the New Testament is reckoned to be about sixty years. It is true that we find mention made in the New Testament of several grown persons who were baptized, but there is no appearance in the instance of any one

of them, that their parents had been converted and baptized into the Christian faith at the time when these persons were infants.

Nor have the Baptists so much as one precedent or example in all the New Testament of any one person that was baptized, either by Christ or his Apostles, by dipping or plunging him all over into the water, and covering him with it. It is nowhere said, that any were so baptized, nor indeed is it intimated, nor can it be collected or concluded from any one text. The proper word for *dipping*, which is used in several places of the New Testament, particularly in these that follow, Mat. xxvi. 23; Mark, xiv. 20; John, xiii. 26; Rev. xix. 13; is never applied to any of the baptisms, said to be administered in the New Testament; and the word *Baptize* does not confine us to understand it of dipping. Although our Saviour was baptized of John in Jordan, and John baptized the multitudes that came to him in C<sup>E</sup>nnon, near to Salim, where there was much water, it is not said either that our Saviour was dipped by John in Jordan, or that the multitudes at C<sup>E</sup>nnon were so baptized by dipping: we are simply told that they were baptized there. The multitudes might be baptized in a river, or wherever there was much water, without being completely immersed therein: for a little water would not suffice to baptize great multitudes, were it only

to be poured or thrown upon them with the baptizer's hand. For this reason probably it was that John baptized at a place where there was much water, though he did not absolutely dip them in it. And though it is said, Acts, viii. 38, That the Ethiopian nobleman went down into the water from his chariot to be baptized by Philip, there is no mention of his having been plunged in that element. For he might have gone in, and be said to have done so, though he went in only so far as to cover his feet with it. Besides, I would request the Antipædobaptist to observe, that the same expression is applied both to Philip and the Eunuch : it is said, *they went down both of them into the water.* If then, by this phrase, we are to understand that the nobleman was plunged all over, it must also mean that Philip was so too, for he went down into the water as well as the distinguished proselyte. But do the Baptists, I would ask, dip themselves all over into the water when they dip those whom they baptize ? I believe not. This text then gives a precedent or example for the baptizer also to plunge himself all over at the same time that he baptizes, as well as that he dip the person baptized ; and if the Baptists do not thus when they administer this sacrament, they are without a precedent in this text for the manner of their doing it.

Another argument in favour of Infant Baptism

may be drawn from the existence of original sin, with which all mankind are affected by reason of the transgression of our first parents. We receive our nature, such as it is, from Adam, but, it should be remembered, it is only through the merits of our Redeemer, Jesus Christ, that grace and truth are to be attained. Now then, in order that infants may be reckoned in Christ, that is, united to him, and made parts of his body, which is the church, there must be something added besides their natural birth. That this is done ordinarily in baptism cannot be denied. If, therefore, infants are incapable of becoming members of the kingdom of Heaven by the first or natural birth, they must either become so by a second and supernatural one, or, as St. Paul expresses it, remain for ever "strangers from the covenant of promise, having no hope, and without God in the world\*," The Baptists themselves admit, in the case of adults, that without some instrument or means of God's appointing, the Kingdom of Heaven cannot be hoped for; but, with regard to infants, they say, as those helpless little beings are not included in the rule of ordinary dispensation, and since there is no express command for their baptism, there will be some other way to supply it accordingly. This, however, is all *gratis dictum* on the

\* Eph. ii. 12.

part of our opponents, ; unless the Kingdom of Heaven is at their disposal ; for there is not, as far as I know, a single text in Scripture to give even any tolerably sufficient warrant to the assertion. The memorable saying of St. Austin against the Pelagians may here be not altogether inappropriately quoted :—“ Let us not of our own heads promise any eternal salvation to infants without the baptism of Christ, which the Holy Scripture, that is to be preferred to all human wit, does not promise.”

In the course of the present undertaking, it will be my endeavour to shew how completely this disciple of Origen was refuted in his notions, and what concessions he was compelled to make : his doctrine had been attacked by St. Jerome, though feebly ; but it was left to St. Austin to beat down his tenets, which he did most completely\*.

If there be any individuals of the present day so senseless as to deny that infants are affected with original corruption, the contrary would be sadly demonstrated by those several diseases, and even death itself, to which they are subjected before either they have committed, or can commit, actual sin. Every one must admit that no suffer-

\* Pelagius is generally believed to have been a Scottish Monk, but he was in reality a Welshman, and his original name was Morgan. See Wall's Treatise on Infant Baptism.

ing can follow but where sin has preceded it, and that infants deeply share in sufferings, daily experience proves. But wherein have these little innocents offended? Their hands, which could not even help themselves, could never hurt others: their tongues have never uttered falsehood or blasphemy, which cannot speak: their feet were never swift to shed blood, which cannot go: all these miseries, and even death itself, fall upon infants, though incapable of actual sin, because of the corruption of their nature, wherein they were conceived and born. It has hitherto passed the skill of the greatest divine to clear and evidence the entrance of original sin into an infant soul, whose spirit, coming immediately from God, must of necessity be pure and perfect after the image of its Maker; nor can this soul, thus pure in itself, be infected from the body, which, being but a lifeless lump of flesh, is incapable of sin, especially so as to make an active impression on the soul. The soul and body of infants, then, being thus severally sinless, who can conceive that the union of two clean things can produce an unclean one—I mean, original corruption? Still, we all of us perceive, by woful experience, that infants, from their conception, are thus infected: that it *is* there we know; but how it came there, is known only to the Great Disposer of events. If we cannot perceive the manner of sin's poison, it is not

wonderful that we are incapable of conceiving the method of grace's antidote in infant souls. If the first Adam could plant the seeds of corruption in the minds of such infants, shall the second Adam be incapable of grafting in their tender hearts the principles of grace ? Let us then allow Heaven to be as incomprehensibly miraculous in healing, as Hell has been insensibly subtle in hurting, the soul.

All are guilty ; Jesus Christ alone excepted, whom God sent not in sinful flesh, but only in the likeness of it\*. And this accounts for his being called *τὸ γενομένον ἄγιον*—the thing born holy—*holy in its very birth*†. As it was on the occasion of the deluge, so is it now : none are saved but by water.

It is objected again that, as infants do not believe, they ought not, therefore, to be baptized. “ Infants cannot be comprehended,” (says Dr. Gale, p. 251,) but are rather designedly excluded : for if infants might be baptized, then some might be baptized, who neither do, nor are obliged to believe in Christ.” By the word *believe*, does the Doctor mean *profess to believe*, or really believe ? To this objection, if St. Austin were to answer, he would say, that infants do believe ; and so would St. Bernard. But how ? not by any faith in

\* Rom. viii. 3.

† Luke, i. 35.

themselves, but by the faith of others ; their parents, for example, or the church. Nor would they regard it as more absurd to say, that they believe through the faith of another, than it is to assert either that they have sinned through the transgression of another, or that they are made righteous through the obedience of another. In the 6th. verse of the eighteenth chapter of St. Matthew, very little ones are said to believe, and *that* by one who knew their hearts. Even the Antipædobaptists say, that want of faith is no hinderance to their salvation. Why, then, should it be to their baptism ? Is more required to their baptism than to their salvation ? to the means, than to the end ?

In fact, *believing* and *being baptized* are made conditions—not the one of the other, but both, of being saved. And now, then, let me ask, what is here that can possibly exclude infants for want of believing ? Believing, say the Baptists, is here put before baptism ; but so is baptism put before salvation. Now then, let me ask our opponents, is none saved but he that is baptized ? If so, all Baptists' infants, by their own doctrine, are doomed to eternal misery. I have read that men must be converted, and became as little children (i. e. in humility and innocency) that they may enter into the Kingdom of God ; but I have yet to learn that infants must become as men (i. e. in under-

standing or faith) before they can be made partakers at this heavenly banquet. I have always understood, on the contrary, that children were bound to liberty; that they were to be entered into a service, which is perfect freedom; that they were to be engaged to an easy, rational, and honourable observance, which was to be rewarded with an infinite, eternal, and glorious recompence; that their holiness was to be insisted upon only that they might be happy; and that they were to be avowed to be God's, that God might be theirs. Were the Jewish infants, I would ask, made sufficiently conversant with the grand truths of religion, so as to believe before they had reached the eighth day of their existence? Did the parent's faith avail the child of Abraham nothing, to entitle him to the seal of the covenant? or is the ordinance of the Almighty concerning infants to be annulled by their alleged incapacity to receive it? When I think of Christ's taking up infants in his arms, and saying—"suffer them to come unto me, and forbid them not," I cannot bring myself to believe that he will have them all left out of his visible church: I think rather that his bowels of love turn towards them. He that made his covenant so large, and his grace so free, has not left out the infants of his people, who, as is confessed, were once in.

Notwithstanding all this, the Antipædobaptists

deny that infants are members of the church of Christ, because they are neither admitted to the sacramental supper, nor are made subjects of ecclesiastical discipline. To this I answer, Let them shew Scripture in proof of what they say. “The thing wherein I differ,” says Mr. Ivimey, “from the church of England is ; they say at their washing or baptizing their infants, that they are members of Christ’s holy church, children of God, and inheritors of the kingdom of heaven. This I dare not believe ; for the Scriptures of God declare, that neither flesh nor the washing of flesh can save\*.” But what is undeniably the consequence to be drawn from this declaration ? A consequence no less grave and important than this :—that little children are *not* of the kingdom of Heaven ; which is an assertion in diametrical opposition to the words of our Lord. “Again, “they that know the language from whence the word *church* is taken,” (continues Mr. Ivimey) “can witness that it signifieth *a people called out*..... This being undeniably the church of Christ, infants cannot be of it ; for they cannot be called out as aforesaid. Known wicked men cannot be of it, because they are not called out : nor Antichrist’s spiritual bondage cannot be of it, because that is a habitation of devils, and all God’s people must

\* Ivimey’s History of the English Baptists, p. 131, 132.

go out of that." Now, either this argument is as fallacious as the former one, or it follows from thence, that the declaration of our Saviour is to be altogether disregarded ; and that, consequently, the kingdom of Heaven, or the church, is *not* like a net which contains fish *good* and *bad* ; nor like a field in which *wheat* is mixed with *tares*.

For my own part, I am decidedly of opinion that baptism may be administered to those who are capable of some ends, though they are incapable of others. Christ himself was baptized when yet he was not capable of many of the great ends of baptism. For baptism was not to him a sign of the washing away of sin, since he had none ; nor of purifying his soul, which was perfect before ; no, nor of his entrance into the visible church, nor of any covenant that he solemnly engaged in with God. And how incapable were the infants that Christ laid his hands on, and took in his arms, of understanding the meaning of what he did, or of receiving any impression of the significance of these actions ; and yet shall we say that Christ should have let it alone till afterwards ? But still more fully let the Antipædobaptists tell us what operation had circumcision on all the infants of church-members formerly.—And, as children were once in the covenant, let them shew us when and where this privilege was taken away. "Baptize *all nations*" was our blessed

Saviour's command. Now this was in opposition to the Jews, who were one nation. How were the Jews discipled ? By circumcision, to be sure, and their children included. Then let the nations be discipled with their children. It cannot be denied that the children have always made a great part of the nation, where mercies or judgments have been received, unless they were expressly excepted.

Since, then, to baptize infants is most agreeable to that charity which our Saviour loved in those who brought them to him ; since it is neither supposed nor pretended by any one that the performance of this rite, in their tender age, can possibly be prejudicial to them ; and since, moreover, it is questioned by many wise and pious men whether the want of it does not expose them to a grievous loss ; surely, under all these circumstances, it is the safer way to baptize them accordingly.

I propose now to offer a few observations in explanation of the sense in which St. Paul says, that some children were holy\*. It seems to me, that the allegation of this distinguished apostle that infants are holy if their parents be professors of the Christian Faith, signifies that they are so by designation merely, just as Jeremiah and John

\* 1 Cor. vii. 14.

the Baptist were “sanctified in their mother’s womb.” By this expression we are to understand simply that they were appointed and designed for holy ministries: not that they had received the promise of the Father, the gift of the Holy Spirit. Just so, then, are the children of Christian parents sanctified; i. e. designed for the service of our Saviour, and the future participation of the promise. In this opinion I am supported by no less an authority than that of Bishop Taylor, and I flatter myself there are few who will deny that this sense of the word *holy* is much more agreeable to the general use of that word in Scripture, than any other interpretation that could be put upon it. No parents can make their children holy in a spiritual holiness; many of them being humbled in Scripture with a profane issue, who lived and died impenitent. Eli and Samuel were signal instances of this. The Rhemists, in their notes on the text in question, maintain that, from these words, we collect that the children of pious parents have no need of baptism. But, to speak in plain terms, this opinion, with which we are here charged, partakes very much of a foul slander; for, in truth, we gather from this passage such children to be only *so* holy, that they have a lawful right to baptism.

Every child amongst the Jews, who was descended from Abraham, and every infant descended

from a circumcised proselyte, might challenge circumcision as due to him, although he could not lay claim to the passover. If, then, any one should ask what advantage a Christian has, and what profit is derivable from pious parentage? my answer is, much every way, since it is by reason of his extraction from them, that he becomes entitled to the sacrament of baptism. God, finally, saves not children for the parents' sake, but parents and children for Christ's sake. The children follow the covenant condition of their parents: if, then, the Almighty take the father into covenant, he takes the children with him. "For the promise is unto you and your children." They shall be made free of God's city, according to the covenant made with Abraham,—"I will be thy God, and the God of thy seed." The covenant here spoken of is called, by some, the covenant of Grace, but we mean by it, only a right to church privileges; having which, we conclude that a child has a right to the seal of the covenant. Archdeacon Pott, in his recently published Discourse on Baptism, pertinently asks—"Did the parents' faith do nothing for the child of Abraham, to entitle him to circumcision? Were the Jewish infants taught sufficiently the great truths of religion, so as to believe, before they had attained the eighth day from their birth?"

Let Zaccheus, the publican, once receive Christ

himself, be he a gentile or a sinner, let him but once profess the faith of Christ, and the covenant of salvation cometh to his house. For now is he a son of Abraham, i. e. the promise made to Abraham now reaches to him.

Another passage by which the practice of Infant Baptism has been clearly and solidly defended is found in the address of St. Peter to the Jews on the day of Pentecost,\* *For the promise is unto you and to your children*, just incidentally mentioned.

The force of this argument cannot be eluded by saying, that it means those only whom the Lord shall call: i. e. as many as shall hereafter repent and be baptized. For it is plain, that the strength of the argument lies in this—that, if they repented and were baptized, the promise should be made good to them, and to their children. And, with regard to their children, what sort of an argument can this be if St. Peter is to be thus interpreted:—You and your children have hitherto been an holy seed; but now, if you believe in Christ yourselves, your children shall be in no better condition than the rest of the pagan world, strangers from the covenant of God! But if afterwards any of them, or any of the heathen, shall for their parts believe and be bap-

\* Acts, ii. 39.

tized, their particular persons shall be taken into covenant, but their children still left out! Would this have been a comfortable argument to persuade them to come in, in relation to the good of their children after them? The plain strength of the argument is this: — God has now remembered this covenant to Abraham, in sending that blessed seed, in whom he promised to be God of him and his seed, Do not, then, by your unbelief, deprive yourselves and your posterity of so excellent a gift: and, except in relation to the covenant, there was no occasion to name their children: it had been sufficient to have said, a promise is made to as many as the Lord shall call. Let this also be carefully remembered, that the Apostle is here speaking to Jews, i. e. to persons who, by habit and education, held the doctrine of the admissibility of their infant offspring to the blessings of the covenant: “The promise is to you and your children.”—In what other sense would a Jew naturally understand these words than as reminding him of the great and affecting privilege of introducing his infant babes to all the advantages of the spiritual covenant of promise! “You and your children.” This, say the Baptists, means *you and your believing posterity*: but would a Jew think so! a Jew—who reckoned it one of his most important privileges to have liberty to bring his infants into the covenant! He must have

understood *children* here to signify *infants*; and can we suppose that the Apostle would have employed on this occasion a term which would have been inevitably and mischievously misunderstood? Howsoever a Baptist may interpret these words, a Jew must inevitably have understood them to mean *you and your infants*. A Baptist may reply that, in this sense, the words would convey nothing new to the ears of a Jew. I answer, it would have been absurd and impertinent if it had done so. I add that, if the interpretation of the Baptists be correct, it will have the effect of branding the Apostle as a cheat and a deceiver; since it represents him as using words in one sense to ensnare those who, he must well know, would inevitably understand them in a sense widely different.

All this receives a great confirmation from the decision which St. Paul pronounced upon the case lately referred to, which was one of not unfrequent occurrence in his time. I am induced again to allude to it because of the persuasion which exists among the Baptists that St. Paul meant that some other and additional meaning should be attached to the words *sanctified*, *unclean*, and *holy*, than we affix to them. The case, it will be remembered, was that of an unbelieving wife and a converted husband. Here, then, a scruple naturally arose whether a Christian might still live in a

state of wedlock with an infidel. This scruple St. Paul at once removed by persuading the husband not to put her away ; saying, “ The unbelieving wife is sanctified by the believing husband, so that the children which she shall bear to him shall be in covenant.” Now, *uncleanness* and *holiness*, when opposed to each other, are never taken either for civilly lawful or unlawful ; but, when applied to living subjects, are never used in Scripture but with relation to the covenant of God. Besides, the term illegitimate would vitiate the Apostle’s reasoning, and likewise make him a liar ; for the unbelief of one of the parents could not make the children illegitimate. The legitimation of the issue depending, not upon the faith, but upon the marriage of the parents, *their* doubt was—whether, according to the example of Ezra, they were not to put away their wives and children, as not belonging to God. The Apostle’s scope is to shew that the children would be unholy, if the faith and believership of one of the parents could not remove the bar which lies in the other being an unbeliever, against the producing of an holy seed, because one of them was a pagan or unbeliever : therefore, the children would not be a holy seed unless the faith or believership of the other parent could remove this bar. St. Paul, when speaking of an infant’s being *sanctified* by the authority of its parents, could mean nothing, as I have before remarked, but its being baptized ;

and, in confirmation of this opinion, let it be observed, that the word *sanctified* is a common expression with him for baptized.

A recent writer of the Baptist communion says, that the Apostle \* “ is not writing upon the subject of baptism.” But this is a plain begging of the question. St. Paul’s argument (says this writer) is—“ You must not put away your unbelieving wives, if they are willing to remain with you, otherwise you must also discard your children, as the law of separation from the heathen obliged the Israelites to do with regard to the children who were conjoined with the unclean party. Under the Gospel dispensation, both the unbelieving party and the children are to be retained.”—It would be honouring this too much to call it sophistry: I will leave it to the unprejudiced reader to characterize it as it deserves. Would not Christians think it utterly improbable that St. Paul should here tell believers of *that* as a glorious privilege, which every Pagan enjoyed, and which they themselves possessed while they were Pagans, and knew that they had it? But I shall return to this subject in another part of this work, where I shall have occasion to discuss it more fully.

The absence of any express mention of Infant Baptism has always been regarded, both by the

\* Cox on Baptism, London, 1824, p. 121.

maintainers and impugners of that practice, as affording the strongest and most obvious argument in favour of the Baptists, and against their opponents. I can well remember the force which this view of the question had at first upon my own mind, and the perplexity and embarrassment which it occasioned before I had thoroughly investigated it: the recollection of these feelings impels me to enter upon this part of my undertaking with an anxious wish to present it to the reader with that clearness and fulness of detail which its importance demands.

I confess that it passes my skill to discover how the Baptists can reconcile it to themselves to admit that infants have the highest benefit of the covenant, and that they shall be saved (dying in infancy,) which they cannot be but by the merits of our Redeemer; and yet exclude them from the sacrament of baptism. For why should not the covenant be confirmed to all those to whom the promises of it belong? If indeed all infants were said, and proved, to be in a state of sin and condemnation, this would be a decisive argument against us; for then we should be chargeable with the presumption of confirming the covenant to those to whom the promises of the covenant do not belong. But, if infants may be saved by Christ, nothing of this nature can be alleged against us. But, the Baptists say that we baptize

infants, who can know nothing at all about the ceremony ; and that is almost as bad. Why so ? —We only by this seal confirm the covenant to those to whom God has promised the blessings of it. And where is the impropriety of that ? or where is the absurdity of admitting into the Church on earth those whom Christ himself has declared to be fit for the kingdom of heaven ?

In short, if no argument can be drawn against us from the nature of things, it must follow inevitably that if infants are in the covenant of Christ, (as they must be who are saved only by His merits,) they are also fit subjects of Christian baptism : and if they are thus qualified, then the general precept of Christ to his Apostles includes them ; and thus the inference is plain and undeniable, that the baptism of infants is as much founded on the authority of the word of God, as the baptism of men and women.

But the Baptists are accustomed to exclaim— “ No : this will never do. Baptism is a positive institution, which gives being to a Church, and we must have a command, mentioning infants expressly. Inferences and deductions have here no force whatever.” This I will proceed to answer in a manner which, I am persuaded, will satisfy every fair and candid mind : though, by the way, I cannot help thinking that the objection comes with a very ill grace from our opponents ;

who, while they employ deduction and inference *against* Infant Baptism, will not permit us to use such arguments *for* it. However, I would earnestly entreat them to consider what follows :

1. That clear and evident deductions from the Scripture are of equal force with the express words of it : for can we suppose that, in the manifestation of those divine truths which are revealed in the gospel, God would have us supersede all use of our understandings in the conclusions to be drawn, and in the consequences which follow, from such doctrines ? And yet this we must do if all just inferences from them be not acknowledged of sufficient authority to determine our judgment, and guide our practice. It was certainly no part of God's design to undermine our reason by revelation, but to enlighten and improve it ; to supply its defects by teaching us those things which, of ourselves, we were not able to find out ; and to clear some principles of religion which, to the light of reason only, seemed disputable and doubtful. But where that light shines clearly and brightly of itself, it is a divine lamp held forth from heaven to direct us, and its authority is not to be despised.

Thus, for instance, in the institution of a sacrament, we must expect a particular revelation : for, this being no part of natural religion, but a positive ordinance, and depending solely on the

will and pleasure of God, we can know nothing but what he shall be pleased to reveal to us. Though baptism was in use among the Jews as a rite in admitting proselytes, and adopted by our Saviour from them, yet nothing can make it a sacrament to us, but a positive command from him. If, therefore, the point in dispute were the authority of the institution itself, the Baptists would have urged strongly and conclusively, that an express precept must be produced. But as to the subjects of baptism the case is totally dissimilar, nor is there the same reason to look for a command, mentioning infants in express terms ; for though the sacrament be new, the covenant is still the same. And therefore we may here argue, that those who were admitted into the old covenant may be received into the new, because the conditions and the promises are the same in both. Here, then, deductions and inferences are of sufficient force to determine the question, and ought to be received in all such cases.

2. But, to make this still more plain, I shall further shew, from the example of St. Peter himself, who was determined by such arguments in a parallel case, that this authority, so much denounced by the Baptists, ought to be submitted to in the case now before us. The circumstance to which I refer is the admission of the Gentiles into the Church of Christ by baptism : and there

the question once was, as much as it is now, about the fit subjects for baptism. For some at that time as firmly believed that the Gentiles were unfit to be admitted into covenant with God, on account of their uncleanness, as the Baptists now consider infants to be unfit on account of their inability to believe. Now I would invite our opponents to observe the method which the Holy Ghost used for the conviction of St. Peter, and how He directs him, by such a train of general instructions, as all along required the just and impartial use of his reason in the application of them ; and at last there was no particular command ; all that the Holy Ghost discovered was no more than this, that the Gentiles were not by Almighty God excluded from the covenant ; whence St. Peter's own reason convinced him that therefore they were to be baptized ! St. Peter had a vision from heaven, wherein there appeared \* *a certain vessel descending unto him as it had been a great sheet, knit at the four corners, and let down to the earth ; wherein were all manner of fourfooted beasts of the earth, and wild beasts, and creeping things, and fowls of the air. And there came a voice to him, Rise Peter, kill and eat. But Peter said, Not so Lord, for I have never eaten any thing that is common or unclean.*

\* Acts, x. 11—17.

*And the voice spake unto him again the second time, What God hath cleansed that call not thou common. This was done thrice: and the vessel was received up again into heaven.* Here is nothing in express words about the Gentiles, nor did St. Peter yet understand that they were concerned in the vision: for it is said (v. 17) that St. Peter *doubted in himself what the vision which he had seen should mean.* But when the Holy Ghost gave him warning of three men coming unto him, and commanded him to go with them, *doubting nothing*, and when the messengers came afterwards from Cornelius the centurion, who was a Gentile, then he was satisfied, *by the deduction of his own reason*, that the vision itself referred to the Gentiles, that God had signified thereby that they, notwithstanding their reputed uncleanness, might be admitted into the Church of Christ.\* Now in all this there was no express command for admitting the Gentiles; all that we have is a vision, from which this may be collected by inference and deduction. And St. Peter, convinced by this, preached Jesus Christ unto them, and as he was preaching, †*The Holy Ghost fell on all them which heard the word, and they spake with tongues and magnified God.* Not one word have we here of a precept or express command to

\* Acts, x. 31.

† ib. 44. 46.

baptize them; but St. Peter, being convinced both by the vision and by the descent of the Holy Ghost upon them, thence concludes, by way of inference, that therefore they ought to be baptized: \* *Can any man forbid water that these should not be baptized which have received the Holy Ghost as well as we? And he commanded them to be baptized in the name of the Lord.*

I hope that those with whom I contend will not affirm that the admission of the Gentiles was not a fundamental doctrine of Christianity. From this instance, therefore, I observe, first, that an inference from a divine revelation had with St. Peter the force and authority of a divine law, as much as if it had been said, *totidem verbis*, “Ye shall admit the Gentiles into the Christian Church.” And for this reason it was that he told his brethren, when summoned before them to give an account of his conduct, that his non-compliance would have been a withholding of the authority of God. † *Forasmuch, then, as God gave them the like gift as he did unto us, who believed on the Lord Jesus Christ, what was I that I could withstand God!*

I observe, secondly, that when we are sufficiently assured that any persons are capable of admission into the Christian covenant, this is

\* Acts, x. 47, 48.      † xi. 17.

authority enough for us to baptize them without any express command. The Holy Ghost, in this vision, gave no command for baptizing Cornelius, but only taught St. Peter that the Gentiles were not to be excluded from the covenant; and thence he himself could sufficiently determine that it was the will of God that they should be baptized : *Who can forbid water that these should be baptized?* And, to bring this home to our case, it is precisely in the same way that we argue for Infant Baptism :—God has, from the beginning with Abraham, taught us that infants are not excluded from the covenant; and thence we conclude, as St. Peter did, that those who are not excluded from the covenant are included in the general precept of admitting them by baptism. How strange and unwarrantable, then, is the force of that prejudice, which will not be satisfied with that mode of conviction which the Holy Spirit himself used with the great Apostle of our Lord !

I have known some object to this, that there was an express command for baptizing the Gentiles. \* *Go teach and baptize all nations.* I answer, that though our opponents, as well as ourselves, justly understand these words as conveying a distinct command that the Gentiles should be converted and be baptized, yet the Apostles, previously to St. Peter's account of this

\* Matt. xxviii. 19.

vision, did not so understand it. If St. Peter had understood it in this sense, the vision, and the command of the Holy Ghost, would have been superfluous and uncalled for. But the truth is, the purpose and meaning of this command of our Lord were not, at the time, understood by any one of the Apostles to whom it was addressed. I may add, moreover, that the words themselves did not necessarily and literally imply that the Gentiles were to be admitted into the Church of Christ. For, as Dr. Hammond has truly observed, \* the word *εθνη* did not then, in common use, import *the Gentiles* always, exclusive of the Jews; but it is frequently used for the Jews scattered among the several nations of the Gentiles. And indeed had that word, in common acceptation, signified *the Gentiles*, I see not how St. Peter and the other Apostles could have been ignorant of the doctrine. It is possible that, on this account, God might think fit to make further discoveries of His will concerning the calling of the Gentiles, the better to instruct them as to the extent and meaning of his gracious purpose in the former words.

But, in short, what was it that moved St. Peter to baptize Cornelius? Did he do so upon the authority of the precept mentioned in the twenty-

\* On Matt. xxiv. 7.

eighth chapter of St. Matthew ? It is plain that he did not ; he did not then so understand these words. And it is observable that, in the whole of the memorable incident, there was not the least mention made of that general precept ; but it was the vision that convinced St. Peter, and rectified his judgment by the rational inferences which he deduced from it. I may also add, that what convinced him convinced all his brethren too.

*\* When they heard these things they held their peace and glorified God, saying, Then hath God also to the Gentiles granted repentance unto life.*

And thus I have invincibly proved that an argument by inference from the Scripture is sufficient to shew us who are the fit subjects for Christian baptism ; and by such an argument we incontestably establish the truth of our position, that the baptism of infants is founded upon the authority of God's holy word.

Another reason for the absence of any *express* mention of Infant Baptism may be drawn from the fact that the New Testament speaks more sparingly of that which is more fully discovered in the Old Testament. And what necessity is there for doing the same thing twice, when the authority of the Old Testament has never been questioned ? How perfectly silent is the New Testament of

\* Acts, xi. 18.

a Christian magistracy. What made the Baptists of old deny it? Where will you find (said they) a Christian in the New Testament who exercised the office of a king, a member of parliament, a justice of the peace, or the like? Of war, too, and of the Sabbath, how little is said in that sacred Volume! If any one should ask why? this is my answer, Because there was enough said of all these things in the Old Testament.

This also is the very case with regard to Infant Baptism. The main question is not *by what sign* members are to be admitted into the church, or whether *by* or *without* a *sign*, but *at what age* they are to be made members thereof. Now this is as fully determined in the Old Testament as most things are in the Bible. What necessity then, I again ask, is there for any thing more? The covenant made by the Almighty with Abraham, into which the little ones were admitted, clearly contained an engagement to give an *eternal life* after this: which is the chief thing in the gospel covenant. This is rendered doubly manifest in our Saviour's conference with the Sadducees upon the subject of the resurrection\*. It surely could never have been thought, by any reasonable creature, that Christ was ignorant

\* Matt. xxii. 31, 32.

either of a good argument, or of the right way of disputing. How then, let me ask, did our Lord prove the resurrection to the Sadducees from that text in the Bible commencing with the words, “I am the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob\*?” These words clearly imported not only that the Almighty had been their God, but still continued to be so; their God, not for food and raiment merely, not for this life only, but for ever. And that therefore these highly-favoured Patriarchs were not dead, but *lived unto God*; that is, were then in the enjoyment of a blissful eternity, with which it had pleased Divine Providence to reward them. If the Sadducees, then, had not felt the full force of this argument, which Our Saviour levelled so directly against their grand error, would not one of these men, at least, who were standing by, have chidden Christ for it, and have said, Give us a text that expressly says *the dead shall rise?* In this case, is it presuming too much to suppose that one, at any rate, amongst the group would have been found possessing sufficient critical acumen to inquire how this quotation proved the resurrection? And would not one of those men have reported abroad that Christ could neither refute the doctrine of their sect, nor give any Scripture

\* Exod. iii, 6.

in proof of his own ? Surely, then, such an argument in favour of Infant Batism as Christ here brings for the resurrection may, without much difficulty, be allowed.

True it is, I will again admit, if such an admission will afford any satisfaction to our opponents, that there is no instance in the Sacred Volume in which it is declared in so many terms that infants were baptized. And this, for the reason already assigned, viz. the frequency of the occurrence. But if any one will take the trouble to look into any of the works which treat of the subject of Jewish baptism, he will find, that they prove it to have been a rite, the performance of which was so much regarded by the Jews as a matter of course, that it was taken for granted, that those who came to *John* for baptism, did so, accompanied by their children. In the Old Testament you may read the history of five hundred years together without any mention of the *circumcision* of a single infant. To be consistent, therefore, the Baptist ought to disbelieve the practice of this rite as well as that of Infant Baptism. It could not be expected that all the duties imposed upon us in the Scriptures should be expressly commanded or declared. Our Saviour never expressly commanded the holy communion to be received, but that, when the supper was celebrated, it should be *in his memorial*. Neither are

women spoken of in Scripture as under any obligation to celebrate the Lord's Supper, and yet it would be a very hazardous assertion to declare that, on this account, they may absent themselves with impunity from our Lord's table, as there is not express divine authority for it. Are all arguments, I would ask, couched in imperial forms ? This method of disputation, in all other instances, would have the effect of rendering nugatory the principal rites of our holy religion. That is eminently contained in Scripture, whatever it be, which may be fairly drawn from it, and we have no better ground than a consequence from Scripture to build other points of our Christian Faith upon, which are, in every sense, as weighty and material as Infant Baptism. Our Lord's divinity is a truth as important and as certain as any thing that was ever disputed in the Christian church ; but it is not demonstrative, as the acts of councils upon that great question shew. The resurrection is a fundamental article of our religion ; yet Christ (as has been already observed) proved it by a consequence. The alteration of the Sabbath-day is a matter of *positive* worship ; still, we employ consequence in proving it. But, besides all this, would it become us to give rules how the Scripture ought to have been expressed ? And, as I have before remarked, in a book necessarily so concise as our Volume of sacred history

must be, the particular things that were matters of course could not be all set down. On other subjects of dispute as well as this, it might appear to the imperfect understandings of some amongst us that, by the simple addition of a few words to the text, all controversy might have been prevented, and the quiet of future ages rendered thereby uninterrupted. But the reverse is here seen; since the command for the baptism of infants is as unqualified as for men; there being, in the language of our Saviour, no specification of persons, but only in such words as can as well involve children as old men; and this, I flatter myself, I shall be able clearly to prove. It becomes us, then, with all humility, thankfully to receive the word of God as we find it, following that interpretation of it only, which, after diligent scrutiny and weighing of the whole, seems to be the true meaning of it, whether set down expressly, or gathered by good consequence. It cannot be expected that all arguments should be demonstrative in a true cause. “Negatives (as Bishop Taylor observes) having no positive cause, are difficult to prove; yet when, as in the case of Infant Baptism, the affirmative is not only received, but practised also, he who will attempt to disturb the actual persuasion, must deign to assign his reason; and furnish evidence for his doctrine.” Whether or no the Baptists have

been able to follow the rule here laid down, I shall now proceed to consider. I cannot forbear remarking, however, upon the degree of singularity attached to the fact that, although the Anabaptists have availed themselves, to the fullest extent, of the arguments which were adduced by the distinguished prelate above referred to in *favour* of their opinions, not the slightest notice has ever been taken by them of Bishop Taylor's *answer* to those same arguments, though contained in the appendix of the very identical work\* in which his apology for them appeared.† I would earnestly recommend the perusal of this book to every one who may be as yet unacquainted with it, and especially to every Baptist similarly circumstanced.

Again, we may justly infer God's allowance of the baptizing of infants in the Christian Church from the argument employed by St. Paul to prove that the old rite of circumcision was not necessary to the Christian Church on account of its having the sacrament of baptism, and because the inward

\* See Taylor on Prophesying (new edition), 1817, § xviii. and Appendix.

† It is with sincere regret that, in an elaborate defence of the practice of the Baptists, published by Mr. Ivimey, in 1811, already referred to, I have observed that the like course has been pursued by him also.—See Ivimey's History of the English Baptists, p. 187.

and spiritual grace of circumcision was conferred in and by that : this the reader may see in Col. ii. 11, 12. By reading the whole chapter it will appear, that the Apostle therein sets himself to satisfy the Christians of that Church, that they had no need of and were not obliged to use the rites and ceremonies of the law of Moses. In these verses he mentions circumcision in particular ; and, to remove their doubts altogether upon this point, he informs them, that in Christ they had received a circumcision not made with hands, even the putting away the body of the sins of the flesh ; by which he means, that in and by Christ they received the inward and spiritual grace of circumcision, that grace which had been promised and engaged on God's part to those who had formerly been circumcised : this is said in verse 11.

To proceed now in what I am about : In verse 12, the Apostle signifies by what mean and sacrament, instead of circumcision, the Christians had received this inward and spiritual grace from Jesus Christ, and that, lie says, was baptism ; for they had received this grace in being buried with Christ in baptism, wherein also they were risen with him. By baptism they became partakers of the Spirit, who had bestowed upon them fully the inward and spiritual grace of circumcision, namely, a death unto sin and a new birth

unto righteousness. Now upon this account it was that St. Paul impressed upon the Colossians the belief that circumcision was no longer necessary to the Church, the sacrament of baptism being now the appointed means of conferring the grace of that: and the Apostle herein plainly gives us ground to conclude God's allowance of the sacrament of baptism to the infants of Christians. If infants do not now require the inward and spiritual grace of circumcision, and may have that, they must need circumcision still, unless some other sacrament and means be appointed to confer it which is allowed them, or they may possess it now without any sacrament. That they cannot have it without this rite we have reason to conclude, from the notorious fact that a sacrament is appointed to the Christian Church for the conveyance of that grace, which, if God had thought fit to bestow it on infants without a sacrament, we may rather believe he would have bestowed on grown persons too; and therefore we cannot suppose he would have instituted again a sacrament by which to confer this grace, if he had intended to bestow it on any without an ordinance of this sort. But since another sacrament is appointed for this express purpose, and the Apostle argues from thence, that the Church has no need of circumcision, his argument plainly supposes, that all who need that grace are allowed the new sacrament

in order to possess themselves of it, and that as circumcision was allowed to infants before, so is baptism now. The Apostle would not have argued, that circumcision was needless, because the Church had baptism, unless infants were allowed to be baptized; for then there would have been room to urge still the necessity of circumcision to them; and those who were for the retaining of this ancient rite might have argued, that although grown persons, converted to Christianity from among the Gentiles, may have received by baptism the grace of circumcision, yet must this sacrament be necessary to our infants, unless they were allowed to be baptized. His using this argument, then, is a plain proof that infants were allowed to be baptized in the Christian Church; and we cannot suppose that the Apostle would have adopted a mode of reasoning that was liable to any objection on the score of validity.

As, then, there is no sin in the baptizing of our infants, on the ground of illegality, so there is sin in forbidding it as unlawful: this is to disallow what God has not forbidden: it is to add a negative command to the precepts of God: and if we must not depart one jot from divine institution in what we do in religion, we ought not to frame laws out of our own heads, and condemn what the Almighty allows in religion.

Another text wherein the reader may see a plain direction of our Saviour for the performance of this ordinance is that in John, iii. 5. *Except a man be born of water and of the Spirit he cannot enter into the kingdom of God:* this is an establishment in general terms; the force of the words is, as I have observed, None shall enter into the kingdom of God, except he be born of water and of the Spirit. Now it cannot be doubted, that if this be the commonly appointed course of admission into the realms of eternal bliss, they who have the disposal of infants ought to bring them to this sacrament: for certainly they ought to do all they can to bring them into a state of salvation. This text, then, is an evident command to all those who have the spiritual care of little children entrusted to them, to bring them to be baptized. The Baptists require an express declaration to this effect; here they have it, if they would but receive it; for the words are an express law or precept establishing baptism for the common rite of admitting *all persons* into the kingdom of God. Since, therefore, infants must be included under *all persons*, it is an express direction for their baptism, in order to their salvation, as well as for that of others. If it be an absolute order for the baptism of any, it is so for them; for it expressly includes all. Will it now be said, that we have no direct warrant for this, because

infants are not particularly mentioned ? Then it may be declared that we are as destitute of scriptural authority for the baptism of men or women, since they are not particularly designated ; and this would be to interpret an establishment, which expressly includes all, as if it-intended none.

A further argument in favour of Infant Baptism may be drawn from the text now under consideration. It is there said, all must be regenerated to enter into the kingdom of heaven, or their final happiness and salvation cannot be attained ; infants, then, must be born again, or they cannot be saved. And as all must be born of water and of the Spirit ere they can be regenerated, and enter into the kingdom of heaven, infants must have this second birth, and then they must be baptized. This sacrament is established here as an ordinary means for the renovation or sanctification of our corrupted nature ; and if this change be necessary to all, it is not less so to infants : if it is to be effected ordinarily in and by the sacrament of baptism, (as the fifth verse of the third chapter of St. John says it is,) this ordinance is requisite to infants, and then this is a command for their baptism. If any have received the gift of the Holy Ghost in any measure before they have had this rite, this circumstance does not do away with the necessity of adopting the ordinary appointed mode of obtaining it ; certainly,

without this, none can have any right to obtain it.

Another passage from which we may justly infer the admissibility of infants to the rights of a covenant along with their parents is in 1 Cor. x.  
2. *They were all baptized into Moses in the cloud and in the sea*: both old and young, the infants, as well as the grown persons, passed through the water, and were all covered with the cloud. They therein then, together with the rest, came under an engagement to learn and obey the doctrines and laws of religion, which should be delivered by Moses: this is what was meant by their being baptized into Moses; and as the ordinances then in use resembled, and we may say prefigured, that now observed, it is plain that infants may come under engagement to learn and obey the laws of Christ: they may thus be discipled to Christ, as the nation of Israel and the *infants* in it were discipled to Moses. It is not necessary, as the Baptists maintain, that a person should be actually taught before he can be regarded as a disciple, for any one may become such who will undertake to learn by a solemn rite and ceremony appointed for this purpose. I should like to ask our opponents whether or no we may reckon the nation of *Israel* as having been discipled to Moses in this their sacramental and significant passage through the Red Sea, in which action, the Apostle

says, They were *baptized into* Moses? If their answer be in the affirmative, then persons may be said to be discipled who simply enter into an engagement to learn, and who are to be taught, without being already actually instructed; for that was all that could be done by Israel at the time in question: they could take upon themselves an engagement to learn, but they could not then be actually taught, because the law of Moses was not then in reality delivered; for it was not till after they had passed through the Red Sea that the whole of the Mosaic code was communicated to them. In this state of comparative ignorance of the law, then, they must have remained till this event, unless they could be actually taught it by Moses before it had been revealed and delivered by God to *Moses*, and by Moses to them. If the Baptists will not allow it to be said that the children of Israel were then discipled to Moses, because they were not then actually taught the law of Moses, they must confess that, by this example, persons may be baptized before they are in their sense, discipled; that is, before they are actually taught what they are to be discipled to; for so were the nation of Israel, both old and young; and therefore thus may people now be, of whatsoever age.

They are decidedly in error, therefore, who maintain that children are not capable of being

made disciples, since they may be engaged to learn, when they shall become qualified ; and the Holy Scripture speaks of infants under this designation. The children of the Gentile proselytes were those upon whom the Jewish converts to Christianity insisted that the rite of circumcision should be performed as well as upon grown persons ; but St. Paul every where taught that they needed it not, as the reader may see in Acts xxi. 21. Now those upon whom the Jewish converts insisted that this ceremony should be performed were children as well as grown persons, and are all comprehended under the name of disciples, as may be seen in Acts, xv. 10.

It is equally erroneous to say that children cannot be entered into the school of Christ : why may they not be admitted to the benefits of his spiritual instruction as well as to the advantages derivable from an attendance at any temporal establishment for education ? True it is, that while they are infants they cannot be taught, nor is it necessary that persons be actually instructed before they are entered into any school : infants, therefore, may be received therein from their very childhood, and engage to learn, and be taught as they grow up and become capable of instruction.

As perfectly unfounded in truth is the assertion that a disciple must be a believer ; for a person may become a disciple, and be so called, without

having actual faith, provided he enters into a solemn engagement to learn, believe, and obey ; and therefore we find the name of disciples given in Scripture to some who did not believe, as it is given to infants. In John, vi. 64, it is said of some who are thus designated, that they did not believe on Christ. These persons were called disciples, because they had (very probably by baptism) entered into an engagement to learn and believe the doctrines of our Saviour. But they did not fulfil their baptismal engagement, though they yet continued in the profession and pretence of it ; and thus it was that they were called disciples, notwithstanding their infidelity. Infants, then, may be so denominated, even during their tender age, since they too are qualified to enter into the like engagement, just as those little ones under the Mosaic dispensation were permitted to share in the general profession to obey the ten commandments, as we have proved by Exod. xix. compared with Deut. v. 2, 3. As, then, the infants of Israel came under this engagement by passing through the Red Sea, so have the little children of the present day been brought into a similar state of subjection by baptism.

It is difficult to conceive how our opponents can possibly be ignorant of the fact that they incur our Saviour's censure and condemnation in

thus breaking his commands. For our Lord distinctly says in Matt. vi. 19, *Whosoever shall break one of these least commandments, and shall teach men so, he shall be called the least in the kingdom of God.* By this expression we are to understand that every such person shall be regarded as of no account, that he shall be vile and despised in the sight of God, and shall be rejected and condemned at the day of judgment, which is sometimes called the kingdom of God, as may be seen in 2 Tim. iv. 1.

While, then, the Antipædobaptists thus instruct their children to fear the profanation of an holy ordinance, they actually keep them in a state of irreverance, by deferring to consecrate or devote them to God ; and this is a great wrong to them, as it continues them in a condition in which they have no right to the mercies and favour of God. And yet our opponents do other things in religion which they have no<sup>t</sup> such express command or warrant for, as they pretend we ought to have, for the lawful baptism of infants. Take, for an example, their practice of administering the Lord's supper to women. The sacrament of the Lord's supper, they should remember, is as positive an institution as is the sacrament of baptism : if, then, a positive institution must distinctly express all those by whom it may be received, they ought

not to administer the bread and wine to females, since they are not expressly mentioned in this ordinance.

On this point it has been pretended by some of our Antipædobaptist brethren, that the words in 1 Cor. ii. 28, *Let a man examine himself*, &c., are an express command for the communion of women, because the Greek word there translated *man*, is of the common gender, and includes both man and woman. But I would have them to know, that the *expression* of the Apostle is limited and confined to the male gender by the word *himself*, which is added to the word *man*. It is, then, an express text for the man, but not for the woman, unless our adversaries should think fit to suppose that the word *himself* was really meant to *express* a woman. However it may be gathered or concluded from this text that women may receive the Lord's supper, it is certainly not so *expressed* here, as they require infants should be in the commission for baptizing them. If, then, the communion of women may be justified, and included in the words, why have we not as good a warrant for the discipling of infants by baptism, who, as I have proved, may be thus disciplined, our Saviour having included them under the expression of *all nations*, though they are not distinctly expressed? If it be an argument against the baptizing of infants, that the Scripture makes

known every positive law or institution of Christ, but does not make known the baptizing of infants, because they are not expressly and particularly mentioned in the law or institution of baptism, then it is an argument against administering the Lord's supper to women, because they are not expressly mentioned in the law or institution of the Lord's supper.

Another objection urged by our opponents against the baptism of infants is, that faith and the profession of actual belief are required, in Scripture, of all candidates for this rite: and therefore that infants, having neither actual faith, nor being capable of making any profession thereof even if they did possess it, cannot be baptized.

Against this objection we have a very good defence. In the first place, it may be truly said that the Baptists have no express Scripture for their opinion and practice in this case. I defy them to shew us where it is mentioned therein, that none but those who have actual faith may be baptized, or that all who may receive this sacrament must first be taught, and actually believe, or make profession of their faith. If they will insist upon it that every positive institution must be delivered in express words in all things that may be done upon it, they thus condemn themselves. They must be said to act without a command, in confining baptism to those that

make profession of actual faith ; for I repeat there is no such law or institution of Christ any where expressed as that none *but believers may be baptized.*

But, say our opponents, *we have express command for baptizing believers.* This, however, is a delusion ; for it is nowhere said in the New Testament, *Ye shall baptize believers.* And if it be unlawful to baptize infants because no direct order has been given to us for so doing, then it is equally so to grant to believers this privilege, because there is no express declaration to that effect, much less is it any where said, *Ye shall baptize believers only.*

I have now shewn, from various passages in the New Testament, that the admission of infants to the advantages of the covenant is repeatedly recognised. I have proved that the qualifications of infants for that admission are to be found, according to the expressly revealed will of the Almighty, in the discipleship of their parents ; and I have produced passages which distinctly refer to this right of infants as an acknowledged principle, which passages can only be understood by admitting this privilege ; and I have finally referred to the unquestionable fact—a fact which our opponents have never denied, though often challenged to it—that this right of infants to the covenant has never been revoked. And now,

even in this early stage of the argument, I might safely and confidently quit the subject, if I had no other duty to perform than to convince a fair and candid inquirer, or one who was disposed to receive the just and legitimate inference from the word of God as a sufficient warrant for this practice: but the Baptists have employed other objections, which compel me to pursue the argument. I have, therefore, to invite the reader's attention to an important view of the condition of infants under the Abrahamic and Levitical covenants, which will throw further light upon the subject discussed in this chapter, and will, I am persuaded, give stronger force to the evidence it contains in favour of Infant Baptism.

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## CHAPTER II.

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*Arguments in proof of the Church-membership  
of Infants under the Abrahamic and Levitical  
dispensations, and of the spiritual nature of  
the Covenant with Abraham.*

In reading the works of the Baptists in defence of their opinions with respect to the rejection of the baptism of infants, I have always observed how greatly embarrassed they appear to be, whenever the argument, which stands at the head of this Chapter, meets them in their course ; how vainly they handle it, and how gladly they avoid it, from a sense of the perplexity and difficulty which it necessarily produces in the minds of those, who deny to the infant offspring of believers the benefit of the spiritual covenant. A careful examination of the connexion subsisting between this great distinguishing feature of the whole economy of divine grace and the practice of Infant Baptism, has satisfied me that it is an argument which subverts from the very foundation the whole doctrine of our opponents, not

only with respect to the subjects of baptism, but also with regard to the nature of the rite itself. Nor am I surprised to find, that it is cautiously avoided by them on all possible occasions, and that when it is forced upon them, either by the circumstances of the case, or by the reasoning of their adversaries, they either speedily dismiss it, or else meet it in a mode of argumentation, which proves they are aware that it is fatal to the tenets which they maintain. I must therefore beg the reader to give to it such attention, as the conduct of our opponents plainly shews it to be entitled to.

That infants have been engaged to honour and obey God, and therefore are capable of coming under such an obligation, appears by what Moses says in Deut. xxix. 10, 11, 12, where he tells the nation of Israel, *Ye stand this day all of you before the Lord your God, your captains of your tribes, your elders, and your officers, with all the men of Israel, your little ones, your wives, &c. that thou shouldst enter into covenant with the Lord thy God:* To enter into covenant with God, is to be bound and engaged to pay him the honour and acknowledgement which is due to him. And to our purpose let it be observed, that this was a covenant which brought them into a state of favour with God, as may be seen by the 13th verse, in which are mentioned the privi-

leges that were granted on God's part of this covenant, to which their infants were admitted ; and the purpose of the covenant is also therein declared to be, *That God might establish them that day for a people unto himself, and that he might be to them a God* : To be a God to them shews their interest in his peculiar favour, and that he would exercise his infinite perfection to their advantage and happiness. It is evident then, from this passage, that infants are capable of being engaged in a covenant with God, and in such a covenant, too, as gives a title to his eternal mercies.

That infants are endowed with this degree of competency is again rendered fully apparent by the appointment of circumcision (Gen. xvii.) which was to be administered to the male infants at eight days old ; and this, the apostle Paul says, rendered those who received it *debtors to do the whole law.* (Gal. v. 3.) It brought them under an engagement thus to fulfil it : and it is worthy of remark, that the favour on God's part of this covenant, into which infants, by circumcision, were admitted, was, that *he would be a God unto them.* as appears by the 7th verse, which includes all the benefits of the covenant of grace.

A further proof have we of the possession of this qualification on the part of infants in Exod. xix. Herein may be seen an account of a covenant

made between God and the nation of Israel at that time, in which the people engaged to *do all that the Lord commanded them*: The Almighty accordingly directed them to be baptized, to take upon them this engagement in and by a solemn baptism, as we are informed in the 10th verse of this chapter, in which God says to Moses, *Go unto the people, and sanctify them to-day and to-morrow, and let them wash their clothes.* This was a command to baptize them, and was understood by the learned among the Jews to include their whole nation: and this also was a covenant which entitled them to the peculiar favour of God, and all those benefits which might be expected from his gracious promise, that if they would keep the covenant, which he was now about to propose to them, and into which he was about to lead them, they should be a peculiar treasure unto him, above all people. Now, that the infants of the nation were included in this covenant, and reckoned engaged to the duties on man's part, and to be thereupon also entitled to the favour on God's part, appears in what Moses says afterwards of this affair in Deut. v. 2, 3. forty years after that time—*The Lord made a covenant with us in Horeb*, (says he) *even with us, who are all of us here alive on this day.* Now, let it be observed, that many of those to whom he thus addressed himself, were infants when that covenant

was made with them, and nearly all of them under twenty years old : these were those little ones whom their parents had said should become a prey, and the grown persons of the nation died in the wilderness, because of their murmuring in fulfilment of the Almighty's threat with regard to them. (Numb. xiv.) When God promised to Abraham, upon his circumcision and that of his males, *I will be a God unto thee, and to thy seed after thee,* (Gen. xvii. 17.) does not this teach us, that the infants of that nation, when circumcised, should be in the number of God's people, and, consequently, members of his church ? Is God, according to the meaning of this promise, a God to any in the world but to his people, and to the members of his church ?

Again, when the covenant, in which the infants were engaged at Horeb on Mount Sinai, (Exod. xix.) admitted them, with the rest of the nation, to be a peculiar treasure to God above all people; when the covenant, mentioned in Deut. xxix, which included their little ones, admitted them with the rest to be people to God, and to the privilege of having him a God to them ; can it be justly and truly said that infants could not become his people, or members of his church ? It may here be seen what manifest falsehoods our deluded brethren receive either from the ignorance or deceitfulness of their teachers, while these *speak*

*perverse things to draw away disciples after them.*

Further, infants are not only qualified to come under the engagement, which is man's part in the sacrament of baptism, but they are also capable of having a right to the mercies promised on God's part in the covenant, and which that sacrament is appointed to confer. Now, that they are competent to be taken into a state of peculiar favour, and to be reckoned members of the church of God, and included amongst his peculiar people, has been already rendered sufficiently clear I trust. And this state includes the privileges to which, it has been said, this sacrament admits the person so baptized.

But, to make this matter the more evident, I will particularly shew that little children are capable of all the privileges already mentioned. And I think it cannot be denied, that they are capable also of remission of sins. If they may be said to be under the influence of any degree of guilt, they are capable of receiving pardon for their transgression. They cannot, then, be withheld from this sacrament upon the account of any incapacity in this case.

They are qualified also for receiving the gift of the Holy Ghost to sanctify them, and to dispose and enable them to live well, in proportion as they shall become "capable of understanding"—

and regulating their own actions. No one surely will be rash enough to say that the Holy Spirit cannot operate in the souls of infants ; this would be to limit the infinite power of the Spirit of God, and to contradict what is said of our Saviour in Holy Scripture. For we therein read that He was a holy Being even from his conception and first formation, being conceived of the Virgin Mary by the Holy Ghost. Luke, i. 35. That children are capable of the grace of the Holy Spirit, and of his operations in them, is undeniably proved by that history in the gospel, which we have in Mark, x. from verse 13 to 16. Our Saviour laid his hands on the infants that were brought to him, and prayed ; and then he certainly obtained and conferred some spiritual blessings and gifts of the Holy Ghost upon them, and then infants are capable of receiving these spiritual blessings.

They are capable, *lastly*, of being in a state of salvation in this life, while infants, and of being saved and brought to the happiness of the next life, if they die such. They may be in covenant with God, it appears ; then they may come to have a covenant right to his favour, and consequently possess a title to eternal happiness, which is a state of salvation. This cannot be denied by those who maintain, that all infants, both of Christains and Heathens, shall be saved by what Christ has

done for mankind, without baptism, or any means to bring them into an union and communion with him. And it is proved, indeed, that they are fit to become participators in God's heavenly promises by our Saviour's words concerning them, Mark, x. 14, *of such is the kingdom of God.* By these words their title to eternal life, which is evidently included in the phrase of *the kingdom of God*, is most satisfactorily established ; though they do not prove that they can obtain this right without this sacrament of baptism ; nor indeed can these words be interpreted in such a sense, without making them contradict what our Saviour says in John, iii. 5. For in this passage our Lord unequivocally asserts that none can enter into the kingdom of God unless they *be born of water and of the Spirit* ; and we must never put such an interpretation on any words or doctrine of our Saviour as would make him contradict himself.

Thus it appears that infants are capable of all that for which the sacrament of baptism is appointed by our Lord ; and why then may we not believe he has appointed this sacrament for them, as well as others ? There is nothing in such an appointment unbecoming the wisdom or any attribute of God, nothing in it disagreeing with the nature of things : and then there is no absurdity, nor any thing unreasonable in the belief of this

appointment, from the incapacity in infants for what the sacrament is appointed to impart.

Again, when we see a general command to the ministers of the Church to make disciples to Christ by baptism, as in Matt. xxviii. 19, which does not particularly mention either young or old, men or women, but orders this to be done among all nations, without the special mention of any particular sorts among them ; we must necessarily believe, that the command provides that all shall receive the sacrament that are qualified for it. Infants, then, must be included in that command, since they are capable of the purposes for which it is appointed ; they are competent to become disciples of Christ by baptism, because they are capable of being engaged to learn and obey the doctrine and laws of Christ. This is further supported by the strong confirmation which the words of Scripture give to that great principle of reason and common feeling of our nature, by which we are inclined to regard the religious privileges of our children as inseparable from our own. It is forcibly observed by Archdeacon Pott, in his admirable Charge on Infant Baptism, already alluded to, that it is plain “from the early pages of the Scripture, and throughout all the tenor of its sacred testimonies in successive ages, that the care for the joint interests of the families of men, was most

expressly manifested and consulted in the gracious tenders of the covenant of salvation. It was for families and households, the component parts of nations, that the merciful provision was designed. Men and nations, what are they, but collective households ? they are so numbered, so accounted, so regarded, so called to treaty under every dispensation which has had God for its author. If this point be well proved, the ground for Infant Baptism will be as securely laid.

“ Where shall we seek the first proof of our main position, but in the promise of salvation to the first pair ? That word, spake distinctly of a plural interest and collective number : it had done so from the first hour that the blessing on the increase of mankind was pronounced. And with reference to things more excellent, manifest it is that nothing needful for salvation was ever promised or fulfilled upon the human race, except in this way. In such terms, that is, with an uniform respect to families and households, the promise and the pledges of the covenant were evermore repeated and renewed. They descended thus to Noah the second founder of mankind. He had to look not only to the many-coloured bow as a token that no second flood should be brought upon the earth, but he had to look to the promised Saviour when he built an altar for his rescued family. The promise of the Lord

came thus to Abraham, ‘I will multiply thee,’ said the Lord, ‘exceedingly; behold my covenant is with thee; and thou shalt be a father of many nations;’ and in that aggregate and undistinguished number who shall exclude the child from his share in the blessing? ‘Every man-child among you,’ said the Lord, ‘shall be circumcised.’ Such is the charge. It respects the child of the proselyte as well as the child of the Hebrew. It goes still by households, and the proselyted stranger, in succeeding times, could not enjoy his own privilege until all the children of his household had been circumcised. Thus, then, in each household all were to be taken into covenant: and remember for what benefits that covenant was pledged: for here arises a distinction, contrived in order to elude the force of these examples. We are told, then, that the covenant made with Abraham, was of a mixed kind, containing promises for things temporal, and promises for things future and eternal: and the inference is drawn that the sign of circumcision might be for the promise of an earthly Canaan; and thus it follows that when this covenant vanished, the seal was laid aside upon the publication of the gospel. In reply to this evasion, we may first observe, that the promise and the covenant, where several benefits are pledged, must take their denomination from the better portion: and for this reason

the covenant with Abraham is expressly called ‘the Everlasting Covenant.’

“ St. Paul declares, that Abraham ‘sojourned in the land of promise as in a strange country:’ so entirely was his life a life of faith. If it be still said, that as there was a promise of salvation, so was there a temporal promise also, and that circumcision might be the seal of the latter, not the former; to this gratuitous assumption, St. Paul’s word will give a decisive answer, and will destroy this plea at once; for he calls the seal of circumcision in plain terms, ‘the seal of the righteousness of faith.’ If this does not denote the seal of a spiritual covenant and a spiritual hope, words cannot do it. The same Apostle completes what we may take in answer to evasive pleas, by shewing most expressly, that baptism came into the place of circumcision, and was appointed for the self-same end. Having declared that the covenant made before the law was given, could not be disannulled by that temporary dispensation, he shews also how this same covenant, which was applied to families and households by the seal of circumcision, was applied by baptism to families and households.”

It is surprising what pains the Baptists have taken in their endeavour to shew that the performance of circumcision admitted the subjects of it to merely temporal advantages, and by no

means to the covenant of grace also. In proportion to the difficulties they have had to struggle with in establishing a defence of this opinion, have been the draughts they have drawn upon their own ingenuity and the credulity of their neighbours. By a careful examination, however, of the actual benefits conferred by circumcision, both spiritual and temporal, as they are stated in Gen. xvii. 7—14. I flatter myself that I shall be able to refute this incorrect notion of our opponents, and to shew that the ground upon which they have made their stand is as insecure and untenable as all their former positions have been proved to be. Let us look, then, at the original institution of it, as it is here recorded. “ And I will establish my covenant between me and thee, and thy seed after thee in their generations for an everlasting covenant, to be a God unto thee, and to thy seed after thee. And I will give unto thee, and to thy seed after thee, the land wherein thou art a stranger, all the land of Canaan, for an everlasting possession : and I will be their God. And God said unto Abraham, Thou shalt keep my covenant, therefore, thou, and thy seed after thee in their generations. This is my covenant, which ye shall keep, between me and you and thy seed after thee ; every manchild among you shall be circumcised. And ye shall circumcise the flesh of your foreskin ; and it shall be a

token of the covenant betwixt me and you. And he that is eight days old shall be circumcised among you, every manchild in your generations, he that is born in the house, or bought with money of any stranger, which is not of thy seed. He that is born in thy house, and he that is bought with thy money, must needs be circumcised: and my covenant shall be in your flesh for an everlasting covenant: And the uncircumcised manchild, whose flesh of his foreskin is not circumcised, that soul shall be cut off from his people; he hath broken my covenant."

Now I think every tolerably careful reader, whose mind is not altogether under those restraints which the shackles of prejudice impose upon us, and whose eyes are consequently open to the truth, as it stands here recorded in Holy Writ, every such person, I say, must admit that two different kinds of blessings are promised in the covenant in question. Mark the expressions contained in it:—"My covenant shall be in your flesh for an EVERLASTING covenant" "I will be a God unto thee, and to thy seed after thee." And again—"I will be their God." These promises, then, I contend, must include spiritual blessings: for the temporal advantages connected with this rite were limited to the seed of Abraham according to the flesh, through the line of Isaac. The circumcision of Ishmael, and of every male in

Abraham's house, (for the children whom he had by Keturah were circumcised, as well as Isaac and Ishmael,) entailed upon them no right to the land of Canaan, any more than the performance of this rite, at a subsequent period, upon the persons of slaves, obtained for them the advantages of civil liberty, or the possession of landed property. If, therefore, these persons derived no spiritual privileges from circumcision, they gained nothing by it. But that spiritual privileges were actually derived from it, is rendered altogether plain by Isa. lvi. 6, 7. The persons here spoken of were circumcised Gentiles ; and all the immunities they enjoyed, as here detailed, were of a purely religious nature. Of this class also were the benefits which the slaves and servants of Abraham partook of, as may be seen in the chapter immediately following the account of their circumcision. Two separate classes of persons are here distinctly spoken of as the proper subjects of the rite : Abraham's natural descendants, and the household of the patriarch : both were instructed in the oracles of God by this patriarch, who was their prophet or teacher, and who brought them up "in the way of the Lord." It was to these oracles, which are of infinitely more value than all the land of the universe, that the circumcised were to look for their principal profit. By these oracles they were made believers,

and though *some* might not have believed, *others* did to their everlasting benefit. Throughout the New Testament, wheresoever the design and advantages of this right are mentioned, the temporal benefits are never spoken of. In Rom. iv. 11. St. Paul says, “ Abraham received the sign of circumcision, a seal of the righteousness of faith,” And again in Rom. iii. 1, 2, 3, wherein the Apostle speaks of the *profits* resulting from this sacrament, temporals are altogether lost sight of by him. The Jews, it is true, had temporal benefits connected with circumcision, but the rite was not instituted on that account only, as is further evidenced by St. Paul in Rom. ii. 25 : “ Circumcision verily *profiteth*,” says he, if thou keep the law: but if thou be a breaker of the law, thy circumcision is made uncircumcision.” As therefore “ the faith of God” cannot mean the land of Canaan: and as a Jew was considered as virtually uncircumcised, howsoever great his temporal advantages might be, by his violation of the law, it is beyond all possibility of doubt in every unprejudiced mind, that the *profit* of circumcision was never intended, nor so much as supposed, to consist in the enjoyment of mere temporal blessings. What sort of an argument, then, is that of our opponents, for the existence of which two words are at any time sufficient—*not true!* Let the reader bear in mind, then, that

under the Jewish dispensation children were members of the Church, and that, as the first converts to Christianity were Jews, they would naturally do in the Christian Church as they did before.

Thus we justly and conclusively argue for Infant Baptism from the analogy of circumcision and baptism in this manner :—If the children of Jews were admitted to circumcision, and thereby made members of the Church, the children of Christians ought to be admitted to baptism, and thereby made members of the same. But to this it is objected, that our arguing from proportion of circumcision is not only of no validity, but also of very dangerous consequences. For, on the same account, it is maintained, we may extend the analogy to the revival of all the Jewish ceremonies, long since abrogated. Such necromancy, in conjuring up the ghosts of departed Judaism is unlawful in itself, and prejudicial to Christian liberty.

“ If Mr. Wall and the Pædobaptists will grant,” says Dr. Gale, p. 453, “ that we are not to judge from the subjects of circumcision, precisely to those of baptism, they give up their own argument ; or if they will stand by this argument, they must deny baptism to females. But I know they will depart from the rule in these cases, and we claim the same allowance to depart from it in the other too.” Dr. Cox, in his work, has adopted

the like language ; but it is plain, from the evasive manner in which circumcision is noticed by this modern writer, that the argument from it is too hard for him. Dr. Cox's predecessor, Dr. Gale, is a much more skilful antagonist, as the reader will perceive before I bring my book to a close.

But what does all this amount to, when stripped of the verbiage which contributes so conveniently to hide the poverty of its meaning ? To nothing more than this :—viz. that because we are to reject the comparison where it does not hold, we must reject it where it does !

True and just would this exception have been had circumcision been a rare ceremony, and no more. But it had in it more of what was sacramental than ceremonious. The ceremonious part of it is utterly extinct, and died issueless ; but the sacramental or gospel part of it, as it contained an everlasting covenant made with Abraham's seed, that is, all true believers, may be said to survive in baptism, the true heir thereof—*sacramenta non moriuntur*, whilst the Church militant is alive, nor is there any interval betwixt them.

Let the reader mark the correspondence between the two churches. Circumcision was certainly the rite of initiation into one : what, then, was the initiatory rite in the other, but baptism ?

And thus, as Bishop Burnet very pertinently remarks—" Though baptism and circumcision do not in every particular agree, it is reasonable to believe that since Christ took baptism from the Jews, and appointed it to be the federal admission to his religion, as circumcision had been in the Mosaical dispensation, baptism was to go on and continue as before, except where Christ declared a change that he made in it." (See Burnet on the xxvith Article, p. 412.)

It must be obvious from what has been said, that infants are in the covenant, and must therefore have the seal of it. The covenant of grace has always for substance been one and the same, even from Adam's days ; but because Abraham was the first with whom the covenant was sealed, we must not look higher than to his time for the seal of it. The law, which was given 430 years after, was not added as a part of the covenant, but because of transgressions, to be a schoolmaster to bring unto Christ. But how did it drive to Christ ? By shewing a righteous law, which could not be obeyed : that men, seeing they could not obey the demands of justice, might be forced to take sanctuary in Christ's atonement. Canaan was not a jot better than many other lands ; but was a type of heaven, into which not Moses (i. e. the law,) but Joshua (i. e. the Gospel of Christ,) was to lead the Israelites. The garments, indeed,

differ, but the body is the same in both. It was faith alone that admitted the Jews into Canaan, just as faith admits Christians into heaven. The promises that were made to the Jews were given to the Gentiles—the same vineyard, the same kingdom, the same olive tree. But the promises which were fulfilled to the Gentiles were spiritual ; therefore, the promises to the Jews were also spiritual.

Abraham received circumcision, a seal of the righteousness by faith, and the Jews received it, not as a nation but as a Church—as a people separated from the world, and taken into covenant with God. It is true, indeed, that circumcision bound those who received it to conform to that manner of administration of the covenant, which was carried much by way of temporal blessings and punishments, they being types of spiritual things. But no man can ever shew that any were to receive the sacrament of circumcision in relation to those outward things only, or to them at all, further than they were administrations of the covenant of grace. Sure I am that the proselytes and their children could not be concerned in any relation at all to the temporal blessings of the land of Canaan, as they were temporal ; because, notwithstanding their circumcision, they were not capable of receiving or purchasing at all in that land. Sojourn there they might, as other strangers also did, but the

inheritance of the land, no, not one foot of it, could be alienated from the several tribes, to whom it was distributed as their possession by the Most High.

But it is objected to this by our opponents, that baptism cannot succeed to circumcision, because that which succeeds must come after in the order of time, when its predecessor is departed; but baptism, for some years, went abreast with circumcision: both were set on foot together in Church practice: for baptism was instituted in our Saviour's life-time, used by his disciples (John, iv. 2) to the Jews, and enjoined immediately after Christ's ascension to be practised on all nations. Now circumcision held in force many years after, as is proved in the case of Timothy, a Jew by the half blood, (see Acts, xvi. 3,) who was circumcised by St. Paul himself: wherefore, say the Baptists, baptism, which was contemporary with circumcision, could not be a successor to it.

To all this I will endeavour to furnish a satisfactory answer: In the first place, then, it is confessed that, for some years, circumcision remained in the Church after Baptism was ordained. Now, have we not often seen the moon shining in the heavens, even after the sun has been some hours risen therein? But then, she shines dully and dimly, with a faint and feeble light, conscious

to herself of usurpation, and guilty of intrusion to the territories and dominions of the sun ; the moon being only made to rule the night. So may it therefore be said that there was a weak and waning appearance of circumcision in the Christian Church after baptism was ordained ; and this for two reasons :—1. It was continued in the Church during a certain period for the more decent expiration of it. God would not have that sacrament, which had lived so long in lustre, die in shame ; and therefore it was thought fit that circumcision, as it began on a good man, should expire on a gracious saint ; Abraham having been the first, and Timothy the last, of whose circumcision we find mention made in Scripture. The second reason in favour of this deduction is furnished by the foresight which the Almighty possessed of the advantage Satan might take, if the Church were left sacramentless, to assault her in the interval of the departure of the one and the introduction of the other. As Ahab was wounded in the naked place between the joints of his harness, so would God have his sacraments rather to lap and fold over the other and exist together, than they should fall short. In Acts, xvii. 2, it may be seen how St. Paul reasons with the Jews out of Scripture on this head. But a greater than St. Paul is here to avow this practice, even our Saviour himself.

Having now shewn that circumcision was evidently the rite of initiation into the covenant of grace, and that it conferred upon the receivers of it all the spiritual advantages with which it was accompanied, imposing upon them, at the same time, an obligation to discharge its duties, I proceed to shew that infants were received into the covenant and the Church ; and that at the tender age of three years, not only were they publicly acknowledged as members of the Church, but that they also personally performed public acts of membership.

Upon this point, whosoever has any doubt, let him begin by reading with attention the following passage from 2 Chron. xxxi. 14—19, which I am confident will go far to rid him of his scepticism.

It is here recorded that Hezekiah appointed “ Kore, the son of Imnah the Levite, over the freewill offerings of God, to distribute the oblations of the Lord, and the most holy things. And next him were Eden, and Miniamin, and Jeshua, and Shemaiah, Amariah, and Shecaniah, in the cities of the priests, in their set office, to give to their brethren by courses, as well to the great as to the small : Beside their genealogy of males from three years old and upward, even unto every one that entereth into the house of the Lord, his daily portion for their service and their charges according to their courses : both to

the genealogy of the priests by the house of their fathers, and the Levites from twenty years old and upward, in their charges by their courses: and to the genealogy of all their little ones, their wives, and their sons, and their daughters, through all the congregation: for in their set office they sanctified themselves in holiness. Also of the sons of Aaron the priests, which were in the fields of the suburbs of their cities, in every several city, the men that were expressed by name, to give portions to all the males among the priests, and to all that were reckoned by genealogies among the Levites."

Mr. Taylor, in his "Facts and Evidences" on the subject of baptism, has made some observations upon the above quotation of a nature so pertinent and so convincing, that I cannot do better than present them to the reader in the author's own words:—

"The genealogy of the males," says he, "was authenticated at three years of age; children at *three years old entered into the house of the Lord*; and the children of the priests, whose were the most holy things, and the oblations to the Lord, had a right to *eat of those most holy things* at this early time of life! The text is studiously precise: These officers were to distribute *to the small* as well as to the great: according to the genealogy of ALL their LITTLE ONES; and these *little ones* are

distinguished from *sons* and from *daughters*: and this principle extended through *all the congregation*. It is clear, then, that at this early time of life, children entered into the holy temple, were participators in the rites there performed, and were borne on the sacred registers.

“ Now this passage gives light on another, which, though often appealed to, has seldom been accurately investigated. Moses says (Deut. xxix. 10—13, ‘ Ye stand this day all of you before the Lord your God . . . . your LITTLE ONES,’—i. e. the children of three years old, according to the passage in the Chronicles,—‘ to ENTER INTO COVENANT with the Lord thy God, and into his oath, which the Lord thy God maketh with thee this day; that he may establish thee to day, for *a people unto himself*, and that he may be *unto thee a God*, as he hath said unto thee, and as he hath sworn unto thy fathers, to Abraham, to Isaac, and to Jacob,’ Children of three years old enter in covenant with God? Yes; this is their own personal act!

“ Nor are these the only places where LITTLE ONES are public characters; for Joshua, confirming, or, rather, renewing, this covenant of the Lord, on Mount Gerizim, ‘ read all the words of the law, the blessings and the cursings, according to all that is written in the book of the law—to the LITTLE ONES;—to children of three years old! Josh. viii. 34, 35. It is clear from the passages

adduced, that children of three years old were members of the Hebrew community, civil and religious, in the most sacred rites, in the most solemn transactions, equally as their fathers were. They were, no doubt, subject to the same preparatory purifications, and were treated on the same ritual principles as their fathers.” \*

After what has been now submitted, can any dispassionate reader fail to be convinced, how sceptical soever he might before have been on the subject, that the Church-membership of infants was founded upon the promise made to Abraham by the Almighty? I think not. Since, then, this fact has been rendered indisputable, is it reasonable to suppose that God, in the period of grace, in the days of the Gospel, would give us a more contracted comfort than the Jewish babes, whom he sealed with a sacrament, as well as enriched with a grace, and thus openly consigned to comfort and favour? Surely no one will have the presumption to pretend that the Almighty has subjected us to any such prohibition. Certain I am that he would search in vain throughout the Gospel for any warrant for such an assertion. Of this the Antipædobaptists are equally convinced; so that, as they are totally unable to shew that the

\* Three Additional Letters to a late Deacon of a Baptist Church, pp. 22, 23.

same divine authority, which granted the right, has at any time cancelled it, they have thought proper to set up an authority of their own for this purpose; an authority, grounded upon reasons as false and fallacious as can well be conceived. It shall be my present object to endeavour to refute them.

It is urged by our opponents that the circumcising of children does not rightly infer the baptizing of them, since it is uncertain whether circumcision be a type of baptism; and that if this were even granted, it cannot infer equal circumstances.

With regard to the first part of this position, I would observe that circumcision was a seal of the righteousness of faith, by which infants were admitted into the covenant of faith, though they had no faith of their own. In this belief we are supported by no less an authority than that of St. Paul. This part of our opponents' objection, therefore, is altogether impertinent. As to the rest, I will readily grant that, even supposing for the sake of argument circumcision to be a type of baptism, we cannot prove from thence that the same circumstances are to be observed. But, in fact, circumcision is *no type of baptism*, but a sacrament of initiation to the Mosaic covenant, as baptism is to the Gospel covenant. This is most distinctly stated in St. Paul's Epistle to the

Colossians, ii. 11, 12;—“ Ye are circumcised with the circumcision made without hands, in putting off the body of the sins of the flesh by the circumcision of Christ ; buried with him in baptism, wherein also ye are risen with him through the faith of the operation of God, who hath raised him from the dead.” If, then, infants were admitted into the covenant of faith by a ceremony by faith and obedience, before they could enter by choice and reason, then so may they now ; and as it is pretended by no one that God has prohibited the membership of infants under the Gospel, the original grant must remain in full force.

Another opinion of the Antipædobaptists is, that the Mosaic law having been repealed by the Gospel, so also is the Church-membership of infants.

But this notion will be found to be no less erroneous than their former objections have been shewn to be. Had our opponents been content to take the word of God for their guide, instead of yielding to the imperfect governance of their own reasonings, they would certainly have avoided this error. For not only has St. Paul stated, but he has also argued, the point, that the Abrahamic is the same as the Christian covenant ; and altogether unaffected by the institution and abolition of the law. “ Brethren,” says the Apostle, Gal. iii. 15—17, “ I speak after the manner of men.

Though it be but a man's covenant, yet, if it be confirmed, no man disannulleth, or addeth thereto. Now to Abraham and his seed were the promises made. He saith not, And to seeds, as of many; but as of one, And to thy seed, which is Christ. And this I say, that the covenant, which was confirmed before of God in Christ, the law, which was four hundred and thirty years after, cannot disannul, that it should make the promise of none effect." From this passage, then, it necessarily results that the membership of infants, having been founded upon the promise made to Abraham four hundred and thirty years prior to the law, the abolition of the law could not affect the rights which infants enjoyed previously to it, and independently of it; and since they received admittance into the Church of God on the ground of it, the same privilege must still be extended to them.

The untenable and unscriptural opinions of the Baptists are in no part of their treatment of this question so conspicuous and palpable as in the arguments by which they attempt to evade the force of this conclusive reasoning, which is founded on the spirituality of the Abrahamic covenant: so adverse is this view of the subject to the opponents of Infant Baptism, that they have been compelled to use much artifice and violence with the plain language of Holy Writ,

in their efforts to escape from the complete refutation which it pronounces against their heterodox notions. It is plain to every candid reader of the Old Testament, that, "When God called his people to him, with their children and their household, promising to be their God, the spiritual privilege must have stood in chief, whatever present benefit might be added or expected. Our Lord shewed this very clearly in that memorable answer,—' Have you not read that which was spoken unto you by God, saying, I am the God of Abraham, and the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob ?—their God, not for food and raiment merely, not for this life only, but for ever ; and, therefore, it is added, ' God is not the God of the dead, but of the living.' If any one can yet think that the grounds of privilege are quite dissimilar in those several dispensations, let them again remember our Lord's words,—' Your father Abraham rejoiced to see my day, and he saw it and was glad.' Impossible it is, then, to draw a negative which shall exclude the child of the believer from this privilege, or which can fasten such exclusion on a change of privileges under diverse dispensations. When God called his people, by the lips of Moses, to covenant with him, this is his language :—' Ye stand this day, all of you, before the Lord your God ; your captains of your tribes, your elders, and your officers,

with all the men of Israel : your little ones, your wives, and the stranger that is in thy camp, from the hewer of thy wood unto the drawer of thy water : that thou shouldst enter into covenant with the Lord thy God, and into his oath, which the Lord thy God maketh with thee this day ; that he may establish thee to-day for a people unto himself ; and that he may be unto thee a God, as he hath said unto thee, and as he hath sworn unto thy fathers, to Abraham, to Isaac, and to Jacob.' And that we may know that this engagement may be made by some in the name and for the benefit of others, as it is to this day for the child, it follows,—' Neither with you only do I make this covenant and this oath ; but with him that standeth here with us this day, before the Lord our God, and also for him that is not here with us this day.' With what reason can we suppose that the little ones of Christ's household should have no benefit of such engagements ? The Horeb covenant is particularly distinguished for its spiritual promises, such as these :—' The Lord thy God will circumcise thine heart, and the heart of thy seed, to love the Lord thy God with all thine heart, and with all thy soul, that thou mayest live.' In how remarkable a manner, and in what affecting terms, does the prophet Joel take up the words of Moses ! ' Blow the trumpet in Zion, sanctify a fast, call a solemn assembly,

gather the people, sanctify the congregation, assemble the elders, and those that suck the breasts.' Thus the little one still finds his place in these distinct enumerations of all those who compose the body of a nation, as they are called to covenant, and reminded of their obligations. That the child is capable of admission to covenant and to privilege, we learn from this strong instance ; that when the house of Levi was numbered, all were numbered from a month old, and were invested with a privilege which involved no less than the priesthood, to the exercise of which they attained afterwards by the mere increase of years. Read the words of prophecy and promise in all parts of Scripture :—' They are thy seed, and the blessed of the Lord, and their offspring with them.' ' I will pour out my Spirit upon thy seed, and my blessing upon thine offspring.' Of the blessing consequent upon the calling of the Gentiles, it is said that they ' should bring their sons and daughters with them ;' little children, for they were to be brought ' upon their shoulders,' surely not as mere spectators ; nor was the parent, as he passed into the fold, to drop his children at the entrance. They are called ' an holy generation ;' ' holy seed ;' with reference still to the comprehensive privileges of the spiritual covenant sealed at all times to the households of God's people. And can there be a sudden change of all

this, without a word to mark it, under the widest and most indulgent ministry of God's gracious dispensation; and this too when the blessing which runs at all times in these terms, 'the promise is to you and to your children,' was expressly so applied by the Apostle, when in one day three thousand souls were added to the Church.

" We know well what displeasure Moses drew upon himself, when the children of his house had been neglected, and not brought near to God by circumcision. Neither the Israelite nor the proselyted stranger could partake of the paschal feast until all the males of their household had received the seal of circumcision; which one should think would make men tremble at this day for their own rights, when they yield the rights and privileges of their children. It is remarkable, that in the only instance perhaps in all the Scriptures, in which children are excluded, it is done in plain words, and for a reason which did not affect their privilege in the least, 'all the house of Joseph' is said to go, 'only their little ones they left in Goshen.' *And why this exception in the narrative, but because, without it, all the house of Joseph would most certainly have been taken to include his children \* ?*"

\* Archdeacon Pott's Charge. pp. 9—12.

I have now produced our warrant for admitting little children into the family of God. True it is, (as the Antipædobaptists say), that the Almighty could bring them to Christ by another way, by his own immeiate act; yet since He never has so done, it is surely but reasonable that they should have this. Here, then, we make our stand ; for though God can save by a miraculous interposition, our charitable ministries ought not to be neglected. Before the institution either of circumcision or baptism, the power of the Almighty was felt and acknowledged to this extent under the patriarchal dispensation ; yet this was not regarded as sufficient to hinder babes from circumcision ; and why then should it keep them from baptism ? Till the statute of repeal, then, be produced, by which their privileges were taken away, the rights of little children to church-membership in the present day, may, I think, be safely rested upon the original grant.

We come now to the consideration of the question whether the future conversion and salvation of an infant be a matter of so dubious a nature as to justify a denial of the privileges conferred by baptism. It is thus regarded by the Antipædobaptists, and this supposed uncertainty upon the subject of an infant's future piety is one of the principal reasons assigned by them for their exclusion of little children from the visible Church

of Christ. Let us examine into the validity of this objection, taking for our guides the lights which are afforded us by the texts of Scripture upon this point.

Every well-wisher to the human race must admit that to inculcate into the minds of little children, at their earliest dawn, sentiments of religion and morality, is a work of the greatest importance. From their very infancy they should be instructed in habits of piety and virtue—“Train up a child in the way he should go;” (said Solomon) “and when he is old, he will not depart from it.” What then is the first duty of a Christian parent? It is surely to dedicate his offspring to the Lord by baptism. “Bring them up in the nurture and admonition of the Lord,” saith St. Paul in his Epistle to the Ephesians, chap. vi. 4. Of so much consequence, indeed, did the Apostle regard the religious instruction and discipline of children, that to no father who disregarded these duties would he grant any office in the Church. “If a man desire the office of a bishop, he must be one that ruleth well his own house, having his children in subjection with all gravity; for if a man knew not how to rule his own house, how shall he take care of the Church of God? . . . Let the deacons rule their children and their own houses well. . . . I left thee in Crete that thou shouldest ordain elders in every

city, as I had appointed thee : If any be blameless, the husband of one wife, having faithful children, not accused of riot, or unruly." 1 Tim. iii. 1—12 : Titus, i. 5, 6.

Much has been said on the impropriety of subjecting young people to a course of religious instruction, before they can comprehend it and make up their minds about it. "We cannot give our children grace, (say the Antipædobaptists) we can only pray for them, and leave them to the Lord." Surely they might go a little further, and bring them up, according to the Apostle, in the doctrine and discipline of Christ : for, by "the Lord," (as used by St. Paul in Eph. vi. 4,) is undoubtedly meant, our Saviour. A parent who subjects his child to a course of Christian instruction before he subjects him to baptism, acts in diametrical opposition to the rules laid down in that Sacred Volume, by which he professes to govern his conduct. If the Antipædobaptist can produce from the New Testament a single example in his favour, I will give up the cause. If then it be the duty of parents to train up their children in the way of the Lord ; and if this relation be brought about by baptism, it is the duty of parents to have their children baptized. For although infants can do nothing, they can receive something : they can by this sacrament as really be admitted into the covenant of faith, even

before they have the grace of faith, as the infants of the Jews could. As well might circumcision have been deferred till the Jewish infants could understand its meaning, as baptism; but since the infants under Moses received that which to them was an insignificant character, so may the infants under Christ have water.

It has already been shewn that our Lord places baptism before a course of Christian instruction, and that the Apostles uniformly acted upon that plan: it has also, I trust, been satisfactorily proved that no one of the arguments against Infant Baptism is supported by so much as a single word of holy writ. I will, however, be still more explicit on this point, and enumerate several additional texts of Scripture which will turn the tables completely upon our opponents.

1. John the Baptist baptized “unto repentance. “John did *baptize* in the wilderness, and *preach* the baptism of repentance for the remission of sins.” Mark, i. 4. Here we see that baptism preceded preaching, and that repentance unto life was not regarded as a necessary preliminary. In the 7th and 8th verses of the same chapter St. Mark adds, that John *preached*, saying, “There cometh one mightier than I after me, the latchet of whose shoes I am not worthy to stoop down and unloose. I indeed *have baptized* you with water: but he shall baptize you

with the Holy Ghost."—And again in St. Matthew, iii. 11, "I indeed baptize you with water *unto* repentance."

2. Our Lord instructed his Apostles to administer the rite before they taught the peculiarities of the Christian covenants, as did our Saviour himself—"Go ye therefore and make disciples\* of all nations; baptizing them . . . and teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you." Matt. xxviii. 19, 20. The Antipædobaptist's version of this text puts *teaching* before *baptizing*.

3. The primitive Christians were baptized *into* Christ by the Apostles, who also regarded baptism as preceding sanctification : "Then Peter said unto them, Repent, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins, and ye shall receive the gifts of the Holy Ghost," Acts, ii. 38. Our opponents reverse the order in both instances.

4. The Apostles exhorted people to receive baptism, as the appointed means of obtaining the effusions of the Holy Ghost. "Now when the Apostles which were at Jerusalem heard that Samaria had received the word of God, they sent unto them Peter and John : who, when they were come down, prayed for them, that they might receive the Holy Ghost : for as yet he was fallen upon

\* See pp 9—13.

none of them: only they were baptized in the name of the Lord Jesus. Then laid they their hands on them, and they received the Holy Ghost." Acts, viii. 14—17. The Antipædobaptists desire *evidence* of a candidate's actual *possession* of sanctification as a prerequisite to the administration of this ordinance. But what sort of faith is that for which there is no evidence? Cornelius and his company did not make so much as a *profession* of faith before baptism, nor was any demanded by St. Peter. Acts, xi. And, in the case of Simon Magus, nothing more than a *profession* was given: the Apostle did not wait for or require any evidence.

5. "Christ loved the Church, and gave himself for it, that he might sanctify and cleanse it with the washing of water, by the word." So says St. Paul in his Epistle to the Ephesians, chap. v. 26. And in his letter to Titus, chap. iii. 5, speaking of our Lord, the Apostle likewise says "According to his mercy he saved us, by the washing of regeneration, and renewing of the Holy Ghost." Here again our opponents reverse the order, insisting upon it that we ought to be in a state of salvation before we receive the ordinance!

And now I think I have firmly established the principles of Pædobaptism from these texts of Scripture; and I flatter myself it will appear

evident to every dispassionate inquirer that our opponents, by placing this rite after repentance, justification, and regeneration, have removed it from the ground on which Scripture has placed it. According to them, there is no sense in which we can be said to be saved by baptism: then there is no sense, either directly or remotely, in which this rite can save *them*. I am very willing to grant them that baptism does not of itself confer this advantage. When it was said by St. Peter, “Baptism *doth now* save us,” and by St. Paul, “He *saved* us by the washing,” &c., the salvation alluded to was, “The answer of a good conscience toward God,” as it is expressly styled by the former Apostle himself. And St. Paul in the latter text, connects with the washing of regeneration, “The renewing of the Holy Ghost.” This renewing it is which saves immediately: the washing is only introductory to it: but this salvation is represented, by both Apostles, as subsequent to the rite, which is in perfect unison with our views of the ordinance.

Thus have we proof, both from Scripture and reason, that parents have a right to ingraft their children in a covenant with God. Infants are sanctified by the word of promise to dedicate them to Christ, though not by the word preached to infants. Shall I dare to think that Abraham, or his family, were not Church-members till they

were circumcised ? If the Church constitution of the Jews took in infants before the Mosaical dispensation, why not after ? Or, if infants were Church-members long before either Temple or Sanhedrim, or High Priest, why may they not be so when these are down ? Wherein consists the necessity of their falling with those who did not rise with them ? Our children have the same right of Church-membership as the children of the Gentiles had to be grafted into the Jewish Church.\* This Church, then, having admitted infant members, our Church must also admit them, since the Jewish Church and the Christian Church are one and the same.† If the covenant into which infants were admitted under the Mosaic dispensation‡ were a covenant of grace, or a gospel covenant, then it is not repealed. But it was a covenant of grace. And the promise was to circumcise the heart, and the heart of their seed.§ This, however, is still more plainly manifested by St. Paul in his Epistle to the Romans, in which he contrasts the two covenants, characterizing that of grace in the very words of Deuteronomy, xxx. 11 to 14.||

\* See Rom. xi. 17, 19, 24.

† See Revelation, xi. 15.

‡ Deut. xxxix. 10, 11, 12.

§ See Deut. xxx. 6; and Hebrews, x. 16, 17.

|| Rom. x. 5 to 9.

I may now, I think, safely take leave of this part of my subject. For what has been submitted is surely amply sufficient to warrant the conclusion that if infants, under Moses, might have that which to them was an insignificant character, so may infants under Christ have water. For if the sacrament of baptism is to be deferred till a child can understand its meaning, so, according to the Anabaptists, ought circumcision to have been delayed till the Jewish infants were endowed with intellect enough to comprehend the meaning of that rite.

I will now proceed to offer a few remarks concerning the particular period of *time* at which this ordinance should be administered. Our opponents tell us that infants ought not to be baptized because they are incapable of judging and choosing for themselves, and that it is highly improper to administer this rite to children before they understand it, and can choose it for themselves. But where is it to be found in Scripture that baptism is to be deferred till this period? And who then is to determine the age at which children are qualified to understand religion, and to make up their minds about it? St. Paul, as has been already shewn, would not allow a father thus to trifle with the souls of his offspring. Nor has the Almighty left a matter of such vital importance to be settled by the rea-

sonings and conjectures of such frail beings as ourselves. He has graciously promised salvation to the children of pious parents, if they will but employ the means with which He has supplied them. How great, then, must be the sum of the evil which our opponents have introduced by their rejection of His benevolent aid ! The following passages, from the works of a living writer\* of distinguished reputation, are so just and so beautiful, that I cannot resist the temptation of giving them to the reader :

“ Though there is no such thing as hereditary holiness, no entail of goodness, yet the Almighty has promised in the Holy Scriptures many blessings to the offspring of the righteous. He never meant, however, that religion was to be transferred arbitrarily like an heir-loom, but the promise was accompanied with conditions and injunctions. The directions were express and frequent to inculcate early and late the great truths of religion, nay, it was enforced with all the minuteness of detail ; precept upon precept, line upon line, here a little and there a little, at all times and seasons, walking by the way, and sitting in the house. And it will generally be found that when the children of pious parents turn out ill, there has been some mistake or some fault on the

\* Mrs. Hannah More.

part of the parents ; that they have not used right methods : nor does it at all derogate from the sovereignty of the Almighty, that he appoints certain means to accomplish certain ends ; and the adoption of these, in obedience to his appointment and in dependence on his blessing, seems to be one of the cases in which we should prove our faith by our obedience.

“ Praying, without instilling principles, may be as ineffectual as instruction without prayer. It is as if the husbandman should expect that praying for sunshine would produce a crop of corn in a field where not one grain has been sown. God could indeed effect this ; but he does not do it, and the means being of his own appointment, his omnipotence is not less exerted by his directing certain effects to follow certain causes, than it would be by any arbitrary act.”

Another objection to Infant Baptism is said to be *the defectiveness of it*. But amongst the Jews, it was no sign of the church admission of infants and entering into covenant by their parents, because they were to renew the same covenant personally afterwards : the age of infancy is defective, but the ordinance is in no way defective. I intreat our opponents to tell us whether infants’ being born the visible subjects of God’s kingdom, (and of Christ’s, I doubt not) before the coming of our Saviour, and their being

solemnly entered into the visible church and covenant, were so great a wrong to them as is here pretended. Was that the reason of the delusion and gross ignorance of the Jews, that they did not stay till they were of age, before they were entered into the church and covenant! I hope I shall stand excused for observing that, in order openly and deliberately to indulge in such an assertion as is involved in this objection, a man must possess a degree of presumption sufficient to entitle him, with strict propriety, to be ranked amongst that miserable and contemptible class of *Atheists*, who are justly the objects both of scorn and reproach to every religious and well constituted mind. An assertion of this nature would make the Almighty the deluder and blinder of the Jews, and accuse his sacred laws and institutions of error, and of so great an error, too, as not only to contradict, but even considerably to hinder the attainment of their ends. Was it not rather their high privilege to have the Almighty thus near to them, and to be born and bred up in his school, under his doctrine, in his kingdom, and among his laws? And if it were a high favor, and not prejudicial to them to be entered, in infancy, into the church and covenant, how comes it to be an injury to us now?

If it be our Saviour's rule, that persons be baptized as soon as they are made disciples, without

delay, and if they that baptize the children of Christians of age cannot possibly do it, then the baptism of such as are of age (ordinarily,) is utterly inconsistent with an obedience to Christ's rule. The Baptists cannot know when their children are first disciples, if not in infancy.

If the Antipædobaptists should inquire what became of the souls of such as died before the eighth day ? my answer would be, that they wanted not circumcision, since want is the absence of that which ought to be had. Now, as there is no command for their circumcision before that time, therefore there is no necessity for it. The Almighty, who is the Great Law-giver, though tying others, is not tied himself to his law ; but can, and no doubt did, give spiritual grace to many infants. This extension of his bountiful goodness, however, I believe was confined chiefly to children born of believing parents, dying in their nonage (i. e. before the eighth day,) and being thus incapacitated for the sign of circumcision. He who calleth things which are not as if they were,\* can call children which are, but are not circumcised, as if they were circumcised. And, though properly, amongst men, they were not named till the eighth day,† yet such infants, viz. on earth, might have their names written in

\* See Rom. iv. 17.

† Luke, ii. 21 ; and iv. 3.

the book of life.\* An instance of this we have in David's child, as recorded by Samuel, and both plain and demonstrative it cannot but appear to all who read the passage in question without prejudice. "And it came to pass on the seventh day that the child died; † i. e. on the seventh day from its nativity, as Tremelius expounds it; and this was very probably the case, since we find no mention of the imposition of any name upon it. This child, in addition to the natural state of corruption, had also the personal blemish of adulterous extraction; and yet how confident was David of its final happiness, "I shall go to him," said he, "but he shall not return to me."‡ Thus we see how manifestly David comforted himself with hope for his deceased child. To say this was merely that he should be buried, were to make David speak like a heathen rather than a Christian. However, it seems he was confident he should not be damned; therefore, whatsoever ground of hope David had, other faithful parents have the like.

The Church-membership of infants under the Jewish dispensation must now, I think, be obvious to every one who carefully weighs the evidence already adduced; but as I am anxious to present this important fact in every possible light, which

\* Phil. iv. 3.    † 2 Sam. xii. 18.    ‡ 2 Sam. xii. 23.

can render it indisputable to the judgments of our opponents, I shall lay it before them in another point of view, which will make it impossible for them to gainsay or controvert this great argument in support of our opinions respecting Infant Baptism.

The original of the Jewish church, considered merely as a church, is to be dated from the covenant which God made with Abraham, whereas that of the Jewish commonwealth is to be dated from the delivery of the law by Moses. For that the Jewish church and commonwealth are distinct things, must be plain to every one who compares Rom. iv. 13, with Gal. iii. 17. And therefore the way to find out the nature of the Jewish church is to consider the nature of the covenant which God made with Abraham: for, upon that covenant the Jewish church was founded. Now it is evident from Rom. iv. 9—17, and ix. 6, &c.; Gal. iii. 5, &c. that the covenant made with Abraham was a spiritual covenant made with him *as the father of believers*, and with his posterity, not as proceeding from him by natural, but by spiritual generation, as heirs of his faith. Hence, the apostle says, in the name of the Christians, *we are the circumcision which worship God in the spirit, and have no confidence in the flesh*, Phil. iii. 3; and *it is one God, which will justify the circumcision*.

*by faith, and the uncircumcision through faith.* Rom. iii. 30, and *if ye be Christ's then are ye Abraham's seed and heirs according to the promise.* Gal. iii. 29.

It will further appear, that this covenant was made not with Abraham's natural but with his spiritual seed, if we consider, that the initiatory covenant into it was circumcision; for the covenant is expressly called *the covenant of circumcision,* Acts, vii. 8; and circumcision, as was observed before, is called *the seal of the righteousness of faith,* Rom. iv. 11; faith, or faithful obedience, being the condition of that covenant which God required of the children of Abraham, and which they promised to perform. It also signified *the circumcision of the heart.* Deut. x. 16, and xxx. 6; Rom. ii. 28, 29.

As to the persons to be admitted into the covenant, we have a very plain account at the institution of it in Gen. xvii. from whence it appears:

*First,* that the children of heathens were to be circumcised, (see Exod. xii. 48, 49,) which also proves that the promise was made not to Abraham's natural, but to his spiritual children; hence, in all ages, great numbers of Gentiles were admitted into the Jewish church by circumcision.

*Secondly,* it appears, that persons of all ages were to be circumcised, and that God was so far from excluding children from circumcision, that he

expressly commanded that their circumcision should not be deferred beyond the eighth day. God, in the abundance of his grace and mercy, was pleased to choose the children with the parents, and to look upon them as holy upon their account: it becomes not us presumptuously to demand the reason of this, or to decline obedience to his express command, because we are unable to account for it, any otherwise than by resolving it into his wisdom and goodness: it is our duty to obey, and say, with the humility and thankfulness of weak and unworthy creatures, *Even so, Father; for so it seemed good in thy sight.* The commandment of God was ground enough for the admission into the Church, and for God to look upon them as *Believers*, though they could not make open confession of their faith.

The faith and consent of the father and the godfather, and of the congregation under which the infant was circumcised, was believed of old by the Jews to be imputed to the child as his own faith and consent;\* and they had good ground in Scripture for this opinion: because the infidelity and disobedience of the parents in wilfully neglecting and despising the rite of circumcision, was imputed to the children, who were considered

\* See Selden *De Jure*, lib. 2. e. 2. *De Synedr.* lib. i. p. 3.

and punished as breakers of the covenant, when they were not circumcised.\* And, therefore, if the fault of parents, in neglecting to bring their children to circumcision, was reputed their's; much more might the act of the parents, in bringing the children to circumcision, be reputed as the act and deed of the children themselves. Thus we find the keeping of the sanctuary imputed to the males of the Kohathites of a month old and upwards, † because their fathers actually kept it, and they were to be trained up to it. And in another place,‡ the *little ones* are expressly said to enter into the covenant with God, because the men of Israel did so. In like manner, though Christ healed grown persons for their own faith,§ yet he healed the children for the faith of their parents, or of others who besought him for them, as it were imputing it to them for their own faith. ||

I cannot too strongly impress it upon the attention of the reader, that the Church of Christ has continued the same in substance, under all the dispensations of God, from the time of the Fall. The Baptists perpetually write and speak of the

\* Gen. xvii. 14.

† Numb. iii. 28.

‡ Deut. xxix. 11, 12.

§ Matt. ix. 29.

|| Mark, ix. 23; Matt. viii. 13; John, iv. 59. Vid. Cassand. de Baptismo Infant. p. 729. Taylor's Great Exemplar, P. 1. Sect. 9.

Christian Church (that is to say, that Church which looks only for salvation to the great Atonement,) as if it had never existed before the death, or at least before the preaching, of our Lord , and this gross and palpable error has mixed itself with and vitiated every argument, by which they attempt to defend their tenets.on the rite of baptism. That they should adhere with such pertinacity to this mistaken notion, in the very face of Scripture, is lamentable indeed ; but it is unhappily too often exemplified, to excite surprise in those who look around them, and see what glaring absurdities are maintained even by those who hold the Bible in their hands, and profess to be guided by it in their faith and practice. We have it, *line upon line*, that Abraham is still the father of the faithful, and that those who believe under the Gospel are as much his children, in the true meaning of the word, as those who were believers under the law; thence St. Peter calls *Christians* by those very titles which God gave to the Jews as his peculiar people: viz: a *chosen generation*, a *royal priesthood*, &c.: \* and St. Paul compares the calling of them to the ingrafting of the wild olive tree into the stock of the old olive tree. †

Circumcision was a sacrament of equal signifi-

\* 1 Peter, ii. 9.

† Rom. xi. 17, &c.

cancy, force, and perfection, with baptism ; and baptism came in the room of circumcision, not as an *antitype* succeeds in the place of the *type*, but as one positive institution succeeds in the place of another. For we must carefully observe, that, strictly and properly speaking, there was the same difference between the type and the antitype, as between the shadow and the substance : insomuch that what was in the type only represented something which, in a more perfect manner, belonged to the antitype. Thus the blood of the sacrifices represented the blood of Christ, which truly purges the conscience from dead works ; and the healing virtue of the brazen serpent was a symbol of the healing virtue of Christ upon the cross : the saving virtue of the antitype did not belong in any measure to the type. But the case was widely different between circumcision and baptism : there, whatever belonged to baptism, as fully belonged to circumcision too.

For, in the first place, circumcision was, under the Jewish dispensation, a real sacrament of initiation into the covenant of grace, a seal of the righteousness of faith, and a confirmation of the covenant between God and man, as much as baptism is now, under the Christian dispensation. Baptism does nothing under the Gospel which circumcision did not as properly and effectually

do under the law ; and therefore it could not be a type of baptism any more than the crown of England, in the time of Elizabeth, was a type of the present crown. And, accordingly, circumcision is never mentioned in the New Testament as a type of baptism, nor baptism as an antitype of it.

*Secondly*, circumcision was not a type of baptism, because a type is a symbol appointed under the *Old Testament*, to prefigure something under the *New*: but baptism was of itself of Jewish institution under the Old Testament, and therefore could not be typified and prefigured by circumcision, because it was used together with it in the Jewish Church. That Church made it a ceremony of initiating proselytes under the law ; and our Saviour, approving of the institution, continued the use of it, and made it the *only* ceremony of initiating proselytes under the Gospel, superadding to it the complete nature of an initiatory sacrament, or the full force of circumcision, as it was a sign of the covenant, and a seal of the righteousness of faith. From all this it is plain, that the Christian Church is regarded and spoken of as being but one Church with that of the Jews, and a continuation of the same Church.

Christians are reckoned and said to be the seed of Abraham ; therefore we may believe their infants to be allowed the privilege and favour

which was extended to the infants of the seed of Abraham formerly. That they are really thus held and designated, the diligent inquirer may see in Gal. iii. 29, where the Apostle says to the baptized Christians of that Church, *If ye be Christ's, then are ye Abraham's seed*; thus plainly intimating both that they were Christ's, and were also Abraham's seed. Now we see by Gen. xvii. that the seed of Abraham, that is those naturally descended from him, had the privilege and right, (being themselves circumcised,) to admit infants naturally descended from them into covenant with him for salvation by the sacrament of circumcision. Further, we shall find by the 12th and 13th verses of that chapter, that the natural issue of Abraham had the privilege of admitting into covenant with God, by the appointed sacrament, not only their natural offspring, but also those infants who were their's otherwise than by natural descent from them. It is said, *He that is born in the house, or bought with money of a stranger, who is not of thy seed, must needs be circumcised.* This allowance was made to Abraham, and established here as a law for his posterity for ages to come. But can we think that the natural descendants of Abraham were allowed to bring such children into covenant with God as were not their immediate offspring; and that those who are Abraham's

by faith have not the privilege of bringing their little ones into covenant with God by the appointed sacrament? Further; we find that those who were the seed of Abraham as followers of him in his faith and obedience, though they were not naturally descended from him, had this privilege allowed them of bringing their children, or any infants of whom they had the disposal, into covenant with God by the appointed sacrament. This may at once be seen by a reference to Exod. xii. 48, where we have this rule concerning the passover: *When a stranger shall sojourn with thee, and will keep the Passover to the Lord, let all his males be circumcised, and then let him come near and keep it.* It is expressly said in the same verse, that no uncircumcised person shall eat the Passover, that is, no male that is uncircumcised; and then the law signifies, that the stranger himself, one not of the natural seed of Abraham, being circumcised, he might admit his infants into covenant by this sacrament: and this surely will give us good ground to believe, that the same privilege is still allowed to those who are the seed of Abraham as followers of him in his faith and obedience; and, then, since Christians are such, we have reason to believe that they are allowed this privilege. It cannot be imagined why this should be granted before, and denied now. To be sure, there is no evidence, nor good

proof, much less any express proof, that it is denied now, notwithstanding our opponents are persuaded so pertinaciously to deny it. We see herein that God granted to the infants of the seed of Abraham a participation in a covenant, the advantages of which corresponded to those of baptism, so that we may fairly conclude that he never intended to be less gracious to the infants of Christians, especially as they also are reckoned the seed of Abraham. We have seen the privilege allowed to those who were no more the seed of Abraham than Christians may be said to be, and who were not naturally descended from him in the times of the Jewish Church; therefore we need not hesitate to infer that it is allowed to such still, and, consequently, that it is permitted to Christians.

The other ground on which we rest our firm reliance upon the gracious consideration of the Almighty towards the Christian Church in this matter is this—that we find the Church of Christ reckoned and said to be no other than a continuation of the Jewish Church. The Jewish Church remained, and was continued in those of that nation and Church who believed in Christ; and they were the foundation and beginning of the Christian Church, and those who were converted to Christianity were only added to that very Church of which Abraham was a member. This

the Apostle Paul most evidently and fully teaches us, Rom. xi. 17. He there compares the Church of God at the period before the advent of Christ to an olive tree: from this tree, or Church, he says, some branches upon the coming of Christ were broken off, and others were added in their place, the identity of the tree or Church still remaining unchanged. By the branches broken off, he means those of the Jewish Church who would not believe in Christ; by the branches grafted into their place, he designed to signify those who from among the Gentiles were converted to Christianity, and baptized: these were grafted in among those branches which remained, that is, among the Jews which believed; therefore the olive tree, or Church of God, still remained and was continued: those heathen converts *were added to a Church still in being*: it was then still one and the same Church, the company of those who partake in the merits and righteousness of Jesus Christ, but made up now of the believing Jews and Gentiles.

Now the case being thus, we must of necessity infer that the Church, which was thus continued, retained the same privilege in this case which they had before, of admitting their infants by a sacrament into the Church, UNLESS THIS HAD BEEN EXPRESSLY AND EVIDENTLY FORBIDDEN THEM. And if they still enjoyed the same privilege which they

had before, then others which were added to them, and came to be members of the same Church, we must believe were allowed the like advantage. The Baptists can never prove that the Gentile members of the Church of Christ must be excluded from the privileges which were enjoyed by the Jewish members of it. We may then conclude, that both might bring their infants into covenant with God by the sacrament appointed for such purpose, since we have seen that the former Church, or rather the same, was allowed to do so in former times.

Now, after this minute inquiry into the particular nature of the Jewish covenant, as it concerned infants as well as adults, let the reader, bearing in mind that the Apostles had been Jews, ask himself how they, or any of their fellow disciples, would naturally understand all or any of the following expressions:—

“ Lydia and her *household*—the *household* of Stephanus—were baptized—Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved and thy *house*—the promise is to you and your children.”

How would one, reading these passages in Judea, understand them? Undoubtedly according to the ordinary meanings which were severally attached to those expressions in that country. They would understand “ baptism” according to the ordinary practice as it was in use among them

in admitting their proselytes ; which was, that, when the master of the house was baptized for a proselyte, all his family, children and dependents, were baptized too. " It is the best rule," says Dr. Lightfoot, that learned Rabbinical writer, " to come to the understanding of the phrases of Scripture, to consider in what sense they were taken in that country and among that people where they were written." Now I appeal to any one who has read the foregoing observations on the Jewish covenant—I appeal to the Baptists themselves—to say, whether the passages I have given above would not inevitably suggest to a Jew the idea of the children as well as the servants of the person to whose household they appertained ; nay, I will confidently refer it to our opponents themselves to say, whether the term *household*, or *house*, would not suggest to a Jew the CHILDREN in the first place, and the servants only secondarily ?

When a proselyte had both children and servants, the children must have been first in his mind, and in the contemplation of those who received him into the Jewish Church ; the servants would naturally be thought of afterwards : and if the servants were received by baptism in consequence of the initiation of their master, the children, *a fortiori*, would be baptized without delay. The usual shift of the Baptists in this

case, that there were no children in those households is nothing to the purpose, because we have shewn that, under the spiritual covenant, as it was sealed by circumcision, the children, if there were ever so many, were all received too ; and we have just ground to infer, that in the households of which we read in the New Testament, if there were ever so many infants, they would necessarily be baptized. I defy the Baptists to confute this.

St. Paul said to the jailor, in answer to the question, *What must I do to be saved? Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved, and thy house.* There is no reason to believe St. Paul knew what family the jailor had ; on the contrary, he seems only to have uttered the same doctrine which had before been announced to the Jews by St. Peter :—*The promise is to you and your children;* and to have used the word *house* in the manner in which it was customarily used by his countrymen.

Having answered our opponents' doctrines by arguments drawn from the analogy of circumcision and baptism, it shall now be my endeavour to strengthen them still more by another consideration in further proof of the indisputable fact of the Church-membership of infants.

It has, in fact, already been shewn, not only that circumcised infants under the Jews were made members of the Church, but that they have

never since been solemnly ousted of it. Therefore, they still remain members of it. I shall not, then, trouble my readers with more than a few observations upon this point, just to make this the more clear. With this view, then, let us suppose a Jew, about the time of St. Paul, converted to Christianity, and, soon after, made father to a son. Now if this child, in his infancy, may not be admitted to baptism, what cause had it no less justly than grievously to complain? Might it but borrow a tongue from the standers by, how pathetically would it expostulate his conduct:—“ Alas, how sad is my estate! My father, being but a Jew, was, at eight days old, made a member of the Church by circumcision: his infancy was no bar or obstacle to him, to render him incapable of the covenant: *I had* thought, now my father is turned a Christian, that his child should not be impaired, because his father is improved. Is a Christian’s son found in a worse state than a Jew’s son was left? I thought the alteration of our condition by Christ’s coming was to perfect, not diminish, what we had before. Christianity may be a good religion for a man to die in, but Judaism was better for children to be born in. We infants, who signified something under the law, are made cyphers under the gospel, no notice being taken of us, until we are arrived at years of discretion.”

When the unrevoked, uncancelled, will of the

Almighty respecting the infants of the professing members of his Church is recorded for our direction, he must be a bold man who shall presume to inhibit them from a share in that covenant to which God has expressly admitted and called them. If infants may be saved, we must needs believe they may come into a state of salvation in the ordinary way, unless it had been expressly said, they must not, or some other way had been evidently appointed for them. How can it be imagined with any appearance of reason, that our Lord has denied them the ordinarily appointed means, when he allows them the grace and favour, which that is a means of, and is appointed to admit men to ? Why should we think the less withheld from them, when they are allowed the greater ? Is the holy sacrament of baptism a more holy thing than the state which it is appointed to admit men to ? Or can infants be declared by our Saviour not unworthy, as such, of that holy state, and shall we think them unworthy of the sacrament of admission ? Our Lord has plainly taught us they are not unworthy of the sacrament, and has given us good warrant to baptize them. The Antipædobaptists, in allowing infants salvation by Christ without baptism, and denying them the sacrament, are guilty of the absurdity of saying they are allowed the inward and spiritual grace of the sacrament, but not

allowed the outward sign of water, and the application of it. And who can think that our Saviour should set a greater value upon the application of water to infants, than upon the application of the purchases of his most precious blood ? I cannot better recapitulate what has been said than in the words of Archbishop Tillotson, with whose remarks I shall close this chapter :

“ It cannot reasonably be imagined that the Apostles, who had all of them been bred up in the *Jewish* religion, which constantly and by virtue of a divine precept and institution admitted infants into that Church, and to the benefits of that covenant, by the rite of circumcision, and likewise the infants of proselytes by baptism,—I say no man could reasonably imagine that the Apostles could understand our Saviour as intending, by any consequence from this text, to exclude the children of Christians out of the Christian Church, and to debar them of the benefit of the new covenant of the Gospel: the children of Christians being every whit as capable of being taken into this new covenant and of partaking of the benefits of it, as children of the Jews were of being admitted into the old: unless we will suppose, (which, at first sight, seems very harsh and unreasonable) that, by the terms of the Christian religion, children are in a much worse condition than the children of the Jews were under the law.

So that the parity of reason being so plain, nothing less than an express prohibition from our Saviour, and an exception of children from baptism, can be thought sufficient to deprive the children of Christians of any privilege of which the Jewish were capable. For the plain meaning of this commission to the Apostles to go and *proselyte all nations to the Christian religion*, and to admit them solemnly into it by baptism, as the Jews were wont to proselyte men to their religion by circumcision and baptism, by which rites also they took in the children of the proselytes, upon promise that when they came to years they should continue in that religion. And if this was our Saviour's meaning, the Apostles had no reason, from the tenor of their commission, to understand that the children of Christian proselytes were any more excluded than the children of proselytes to the *Jewish* religion, unless our Saviour had expressly excepted them.\*

\* Archbishop Tillotson's Works, folio, 1717, Vol. I. pp. 513, 514.

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## CHAPTER III.

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*Testimony in support of Infant Baptism from the Fathers, of the four first centuries of the Christian era.*

I now proceed to lay before the reader a species of evidence in proof of the practice of paedobaptism without which a book of this nature must be materially imperfect, though I regret to observe that some writers on this subject have but sparingly employed it, while our adversaries have been encouraged by this remissness to turn it in a most disingenuous manner to their own advantage: proofs of this I shall have occasion to offer in the sequel. As an introduction, however, to the subject of this chapter, I must entreat the reader to consider the following particulars:—I have shewn, from the Scriptures of the Old and New Testaments, that Infant Baptism is to be inferred, by just and evident consequence, from the nature of the divinely appointed rites of initiation into the Jewish and Christian Churches, (or rather

into the Church of Christ under those two dispensations); and I think I am fairly intitled to assume the fact of paedobaptism as a principle which has been uncontestedly established. Now, what would be the next step which a fair inquirer would naturally take in pursuing this investigation? Would it not be to search, as far as he could, into the writings of those who succeeded the Apostles in the Christian Church, to discover what allusions they make to this rite, and to satisfy himself, by a fair and copious induction of historical evidence, whether the baptism of infants did really exist in the earliest ages after the Apostles? Judging, beforehand, from the state of the world, and from the partial diffusion of Christianity, I should not expect to find, in the age immediately succeeding that of the Apostles, many allusions to the practice for which I contend; because, at the first establishment of a Church in any place, or district, in these early times, the parents would naturally be first proselyted, and baptized, and then their infants would be received by the rite of Christian initiation into the Church as well as themselves: in the infancy of the Church, we should naturally hear more of the baptism of adults; but when once the Church had been for a while established, adult baptism, which had previously excited more attention, would gradually come into disuse, and Infant

Baptism alone, or for the most part, would prevail,\* and in the same degree be noticed and commented upon. Now this anticipation, from the nature and circumstances of the case, is fully confirmed by historical fact: on examining the ecclesiastical history of the first ages of the Church, we find the matter precisely as we had expected; — the allusions to adult baptism are more numerous at the commencement of the Christian era, while the references to that of infants are few and incidental; as we go on, the former become gradually less frequent, and by degrees give place to the latter; or, if adult baptisms do at any period become more abundant, this circumstance will be found to owe its existence to a cause which cannot, in the slightest degree, affect the argument by which the sound and scriptural defence of Infant Baptism has been so immovably established.

Before I proceed to particulars, I will submit to the reader a list of the most distinguished Fathers of the Christian Church, with the respective dates which mark the interval that elapsed

\* Distinguere oportet inter ecclesiam constituendam, et constitutam: in illâ adulti prius docendi, et ubi crediderunt, tum ipsi, tum eorum liberi, sunt baptizandi; in hâc vero infantes prius baptizandi, ac postea sunt docendi. *Vossius de Bapt. Disputatio* xiii. c. 2.

from the time of the Apostles to the period at which each writer flourished.

Years after the age of the Apostles.

Justin Martyr	-	-	-	-	40
Irenæus	-	-	-	-	67
Tertullian	-	-	-	-	100
Origen	-	-	-	-	110
Cyprian	-	-	-	-	150
Gregory Nazianzen	-	-	-	-	260
St. Basil	-	-	-	-	260
St. Ambrose	-	-	-	-	274
St. Chrysostom	-	-	-	-	280
St. Jerome	-	-	From 278 to 310		
St. Augustine	-	-	-	-	288

1.—Justin Martyr, after the Apostles forty years.

“ Several persons among us of both sexes, of sixty and seventy years old, who were proselyted, [or made disciples] to Christ in their childhood, continue uncorrupted.”

The word which I have translated, above, *proselyted*, or made disciples, is the very same word which is employed by St. Matthew, in expressing our Lord’s command *Μαθητευσατε*, “ Proselyte,” or “ disciple all nations,” and this, says Justin, happened to these persons in their childhood, *εκ παιδων*. Now let the reader consider the force of this argument against the Baptists : they say

that the command of our Saviour cannot be so interpreted as to include infants, because they cannot be made disciples ; but here is a Christian Father, (writing about ninety years after St. Matthew,) who testifies that infants may be made disciples, and were, in fact, made disciples in the middle of the Apostolic age.

2.—Irenæus, after the Apostles sixty-seven years, speaking of Christ, says—

“ Therefore, as he was a Master, he had also the age of a Master. Not disdaining, or going in a way above human nature, nor breaking in his own person the law which he had set for mankind ; but sanctifying every several age by the likeness which it has to him : for he came to save all persons by himself ; all, I mean, who by him are *regenerated* (or *baptized*) unto God ; *infants*, and little ones, and children, and youth, and old persons. Therefore he went through the several ages ; for infants, being made an infant, sanctifying infants ; to little ones, he was made a little one, sanctifying those of that age, &c.”

This testimony, which reckons infants among those who are *regenerated*, is plain and full, provided the reader is satisfied that the word *regeneration*, in the language which was usual in those times, signifies *baptism* : and that cannot be questioned by any one who is at all acquainted with the works of this period, when it was

commonly, repeatedly, and undeniably used in that sense.

3.—Before I notice the testimony of Tertullian and Origen, who come next to be considered, I beg to be indulged in a few observations respecting their character, which ought to be carefully weighed in estimating the credit which their evidence respecting this question is entitled to. They were both men of alert and active minds, and of profound and extensive learning ; but both were unhappily disposed to aim at singularity in their opinions, and accordingly each of them fell into great and monstrous errors in the faith.

Tertullian fell into the heresy of the Montanists, who blasphemously maintained that a person named Montanus was that *Paraclete*, or *Comforter*, whom our Lord promised to send to his disciples. Tertullian afterwards established a sect of his own, which subsisted until the time of St. Augustine, who had the happiness to convert the last of them to the true religion.

Origen was a follower of the celebrated Plato, and held the doctrine of the pre-existence of souls,—that the souls of all men had had a previous existence before the creation of the world, and, having sinned in their former state, were sent into this world for punishment ; whence he derived the doctrine of original sin, which the Holy Scripture ascribes to the fall of Adam : he main-

tained other errors about the resurrection and the future state, which need not now be more particularly noticed.

I think it necessary to mention these things to shew, that the opinions which these men held on the subject of baptism are entitled to but little consideration; but this does not in the slightest degree impeach the validity of their testimony to *a matter of fact*, of which they are certainly competent witnesses. The opinions of Tertullian on baptism are absurd, perplexed, and contradictory. In one place, where he is treating of the *necessity* of baptism, he speaks of that necessity as absolute, and of those who die unbaptized, as utterly lost, and is enraged at those who maintain that faith without it is necessary to salvation: yet, afterwards, when he is speaking of the *weight*, as he calls it, of baptism, he advises several sorts of persons to defer it; and, to encourage them, tells them that if they should by that delay happen to miss of it, *an entire faith is secure of salvation!* And to urge this latter advice the more strongly, he speaks of infants as if they were innocent and sinless, and so had no need of that forgiveness of sins, which is sealed in that sacrament: yet, notwithstanding all this, he owns, in another place, that the doctrine of original sin in infants is sound and scriptural, and that every soul born of Adam is unclean.

and sinful, and continues so until he is enrolled in Christ ; and in proof of this he quotes John, iii. 5. *Except any one (τις) be born of water and of the Spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God.* The only way in which the commentators on this Father have contrived to reconcile these opposite opinions is by supposing that when there was no danger there was no necessity for baptizing an infant; but that, in the case of alarming illness, it was necessary to baptize a dying child to save it.

The words, however, which the Antipædobaptists produce from this writer are so far from proving the nonexistence of Infant Baptism in his time, that they render the contrary quite evident.—“ What need their *guiltless* age make such haste to the forgiveness of sins ? ” These words plainly intimate that there was then a custom of baptizing infants : but that he disapproved of the custom ; and he grounds his dislike of it upon a tenet which crosses in diameter an express declaration of the word of God :—he says that infants were *guiltless*, and therefore needed it not ; here he not only contradicts the Scripture, but he contradicts himself also ; for no sooner does he speak of a dying infant, than his fears are all awake, and he instantly advises that it be baptized without delay, lest it should be lost for ever. However, the opinions of this writer are of no concern to us : what we want to know is, whether he gives

any testimony to the practice of paedobaptism ; and that, as I have shewn, he certainly does : his opinion against the practice of the Church does not weigh a feather in the balance : besides, it does not appear that any one was prevailed upon by him to alter that practice; for we nowhere find that either the *Montanists*, or the *Tertullianists*, whose sect he founded, were against it. On the contrary, St. Augustine, reciting the tenets of both these sects, does not mention any thing of such an opinion as held by either of them, but declares, in another place, that he never read of any sect that denied Infant Baptism.

I ought to mention, with reference to this passage from Tertullian, that it is manifest St. Augustine and Pelagius, and several others, who conducted the celebrated Pelagian controversy, had never seen this book of Tertullian on baptism. For when St. Augustine\* pleaded that no Christian, Catholic or Sectary, had ever taught otherwise than that one reason for the baptizing of infants was for the forgiveness of original sin, Pelagius granted that there was none that denied the baptism of infants : but when he and Celestius and Julian examine and search all antiquity for the purpose of finding out some passage or other to prove that they were baptized for other reasons, how greatly would that sentence from Tertullian have served their cause, *What need*

\* Augustin. *De Naturâ et Gratiâ*, cap. 6.

*their guiltless age make haste to the forgiveness of sin!* If they had seen the passage, surely they would have produced it; unless we suppose that they would not quote Tertullian, because he contradicts himself upon this point; or, that they would not urge his authority because it was in no good repute in the Christian Church, on account of his heterodox notions. Though it should be mentioned, that Dr. Allix is of opinion that the book of Tertullian had been written before.

It was customary, in those early times, if any one made use of Tertullian's authority in any matter of controversy, to silence the disputant with a well-known saying of St. Jerome,—“That man (Tertullian) did not belong to the Church.” And Pelagius, notwithstanding his denial of original sin, had no wish to be regarded as a schismatic, or to injure his reputation, by quoting in his own defence the authority of a man who was looked upon as unsound in the Christian faith.

It is well observed by Baronius, that when the *Donatists* maintained against St. Augustine that baptism given by heretics is a nullity, and that the party must be baptized again, if St. Augustine could have shewn that this opinion was first set on foot by Tertullian, that one thing would alone have thrown discredit upon it; and that he might have done, had he ever seen this book on baptism, in which that opinion is asserted, c. 15.

How ill an opinion must the Church then have entertained of Tertullian, when it was considered enough to condemn an opinion, to say that he had patronized it !

I now proceed to present to the reader the testimony of Origen, and here we shall find the evidence conclusive in support of the practice of the baptism of infants.

“ Hear David speaking : ‘ I was,’ says he, ‘ conceived in iniquity, and in sin did my mother bring me forth ;’ shewing that any soul that is born in the flesh is defiled with the pollution of sin and iniquity, and therefore was that spoken which we related before, that *no one is clean from pollution, though his life be but the length of one day.* Besides all this, let it be considered what is the reason, that whereas the baptism of the Church is given for forgiveness of sins, infants, also, *are by the usage of the Church baptized* ; since, if there were nothing in infants that wanted forgiveness and mercy, the grace of baptism would be needless to them.”—Homilia viii. in Levit. xii.

Again :

“ Having occasion given in this place, I will mention a thing that causes numerous inquiries among the brethren ; infants are baptized for the forgiveness of sins. Of what sins ? Or, when have they sinned ? Or, how can any reason of the Laver in their case hold good, but according to

that sense that we mentioned even now : *None is free from pollution, though his life be but of the length of one day upon the earth?* And because by the sacrament of baptism the pollution of our birth is taken away, therefore are infants baptized.”—*Homilia in Lucam, xiv.*

And in another place :

“ And also in the law it is commanded that a sacrifice be offered for every child that is born :—*A pair of turtle doves, or two young pigeons: of which one is for a sin-offering, and the other for a burnt-offering.* For what sin is this one pigeon offered ? Can the child that is newly born have committed any sin ? It has even then sin, for which the sacrifice is commanded to be offered ; from which even he *whose life is but of one day* is denied to be free. Of this sin David is supposed to have said that which we mentioned before ; *In sin did my mother conceive me:* for there is, in the history, no account of any particular sin that his mother had committed.

“ For this also it was, that the Church had *from the Apostles a tradition* [or order] to give baptism even to infants. For they to whom the divine mysteries are committed knew that there is in all persons the natural pollution of sin, which must be done away by water and the Spirit ; for which reason the body itself is also called *the body of sin.*”

The setestimonies are so plain that nothing need be said to illustrate them, and they are so strong that nothing can be said against them. They not only suppose the practice to be generally known and used, but they also affirm that it was ordered by the Apostles.

Here, however, I am bound in candour to state a fact which ought not to be concealed, though it does not affect the evidence here adduced. All Origen's works were originally written in the Greek language, and, unhappily, they are, with a few exceptions, utterly lost ; there remain nothing but Latin translations of them : and when these translations were collected together, a great many spurious productions were mixed with them, and went for some time under Origen's name. But, upon the revival of learning, the ingenuity and ability of the critics immediately detected the imposture, and purged the works of this Father of all compositions that did not belong to him, admitting none for his but such as they had manifestly discovered to have been translated into Latin by St. Jerome, or by Ruffinus, both of whom lived within the time which I have limited for my present inquiry, namely the first 400 years. Now, of the quotations which I have given above, those from the Homilies of St. Luke were translated by Jerome ; those from the Homilies on Leviticus, and the Comments on the

Epistles to the Romans, were translated by Ruffinus. Mr. Wall, to whose work I owe many obligations for some valuable evidence from the writings of the early Fathers, has declared, after a patient and accurate investigation, that there cannot be a doubt of the authenticity of the writings of Origin from which the foregoing citations are made ; and he says, that though the celebrated Erasmus was once of opinion that they were spurious, yet he afterwards recanted, and declared that he was perfectly satisfied that they were the authentic translations of Jerome from the works of Origen. I mention this the rather, because some Baptist writers, who had seen Erasmus's first erroneous opinion, have boasted that his opinion at once decides the spuriousness of our authority ; while they have been so ignorant as not to know that he afterwards revoked his opinion, or else they have been so disengenuous as not to own that he did so.

There is another fact concerning these translations of Origen, which I must not conceal from the reader. I have already adverted to some of the heterodox opinions which have been found in the works of this illustrious writer ; now, his translators, Jerome and Ruffinus, used different methods in giving his works in the Latin language ; the former made no alterations, but gave the sense of the original, just as he found it : but

the latter used a liberty which cannot easily be defended ; he altered, and omitted, as best suited his own inclination, whatever appeared to contradict the faith and discipline of the Christian Church, and the authority of the Holy Scriptures ; and in the Homilies on Leviticus especially, as he tells us himself, he has taken a greater liberty than usual ; so that, to use the words of Erasmus, “ the reader can hardly tell whether he is reading Ruffinus or Origen.”

For this reason some of our opponents wholly reject the quotation I have given from the Homilies on *Leviticus* and *Romans* : but I would intreat the reader to weigh what I am now going to submit to him, and I am sure he will consider the evidence from those quotations as being entitled to some consideration.

First, the Homily on St. Luke, translated by Jerome, contains the same things in effect as that on Leveticus, which, as we have said, was translated by Ruffinus : it is as full an evidence of *the practice of Infant Baptism* ; only it omits the declaration that this practice was appointed by apostolical tradition. And, secondly, there is no ground whatever for believing that Ruffinus made any alteration in those passages in Origen which treat of, or allude to, Infant Baptism ; because this was not one of the subjects upon which the validity of Origen’s opinion was

questioned by the Church at the time when Ruffinus lived. Those points on which the opinions of Origin were either singular or erroneous are concerning the resurrection of the same body, the eternity of hell torments, the pre-existence of souls, some expressions respecting the doctrine of the Holy Trinity, and several others, but not one word about the baptism of infants. This we evidently collect from the allusions to Origen's tenets in the invectives of Jerome and Ruffinus against each other, and in their apologies, in which these sentiments of Origen are largely and sharply canvassed. Epiphanius, though he mentions the errors of this Father, says nothing about Infant Baptism ; and, particularly, Theophilus, Bishop of Alexandria, enumerates thirty-five singular opinions of his, but is totally silent on the subject of paedobaptism. Ruffinus was, in fact, a great admirer of Origen, and his great regard for him moved him to expunge from his works every thing of an exceptionable character, or to alter it, and give it a favourable turn in the version, or in the annotations which he subjoined to the text. But what could lead Ruffinus to make any alteration in those passages which relate to Infant Baptism, concerning which Origen's worst enemies never charged him with holding an unsound or singular opinion ?

I will add one passage more from Origen in

proof of the practice I am contending for ; it is from Homily ix. on Joshua. He is speaking of that text (Joshua, viii. 33) where we are told that Joshua wrote a copy of the law of Moses on the stones of the altar : and that he did so *in the presence of the children of Israel*. And, in allusion to this, speaking of our Lord's writing his law, not on stones, but in the hearts of his disciples, he adduces this argument to shew that this also is done *in the presence of the children of Israel*: he says that the word Israel, signifies *a mind that sees God* ; and that this interpretation appertains justly to angels : and that the angels are to be considered as present at the administration of the sacraments. And then he adds,—

“ According to that saying of our Lord concerning infants (and thou wast an infant when thou wast baptized), ‘ Their angels do always behold the face of my Father which is in heaven,’ so, then, Jesus wrote his law in thy heart in the presence of those children of Israel, *Beholders of God’s face, at the time when the sacramental faith was given thee.*”

The only thing that is doubtful in this place is, whether, when he says “ Thou wast an infant when thou wast baptized,” he means an infant in age, or only an infant in a spiritual sense. Erasmus understands it of an infant in age ; for, in his edition of Origen’s works, he places in the

margin, at that passage, the word *pædobaptismus*, i. e. Infant Baptism. I must observe, likewise, that though this part of Origen's works is not extant in the original Greek, yet we may the more securely rely upon the evidence it affords, since Ruffinus himself tells us that in the translation of these homilies, and of those on Judges, he has neither added nor omitted any thing.\*

But whatever determination has been come to concerning either the authenticity or meaning of this passage, or of any other in the writings of Origen which alludes to paedobaptism, this is certain, that in his works he generally speaks of baptism as being given to infants; for St. Jerome (who was of all the Latin Fathers the most conversant with the writings of Origen) tells us that he did so, and also that he built his false hypothesis of the pre-existence of souls partly on this very ground, that he might give the better account of the sins for which an infant is baptized.† Now Origen, although he assigns a false ground for the baptism of infants, is, notwithstanding, as good a witness of the practice itself as the most sound and orthodox person who mentions it; besides, he was, as I have observed, a very learned man, and could not be ignorant of the practice

\* Perorat. in Hom. ad Romanos.

† Dialog. iii. contra Pelagian.

of the various Churches, which he had visited in his travels : he was born and educated in Alexandria, he resided for some time in Greece, at Rome, in Cappadocia, and Arabia, and spent the greater part of his life in Syria and Palestine. I am entitled, then, to maintain that the testimony of such a witness is an irrefragable proof of the existence of the practice of paedobaptism in the third century of the Christian æra.

We come now to the testimony of St. Cyprian, bishop of Carthage. It was the custom in that city, and in all other cities of great extent and importance, for the neighbouring bishops to assemble on stated occasions, to deliberate and determine concerning the affairs of the Church. On the occasion to which I am about to refer, in the year 253, sixty-six bishops were assembled in council, and a bishop named Fidus had sent a letter in which he submitted two cases for their decision ; one was concerning Victor, a presbyter, who, after some crime, had been prematurely admitted to absolution by his bishop : with this, however, we have no concern : the other question was, Whether an infant, before it was eight days old, might be baptized, in a case of necessity. I will now give the reader that portion of the letter in answer to Fidus which has a reference to the latter question.

“ Cyprian and the rest of the Bishops who

were present at the Council, sixty-six in number, to Fidus, our brother, greeting.

“ We have read your letter, dearest brother, in which you write concerning one Victor, a presbyter, &c. \* \* \* \* \* But as to the case of infants : Whereas you judge that *they ought not to be baptized within two or three days after they are born, and that the rule of circumcision is to be observed, so that none should be baptized and sanctified before the eighth day after he is born* ; we were all in our assembly of a contrary opinion. For, as for what you thought fitting to be done, there was not one that was of your mind, but all of us, on the contrary, judged that the grace and mercy of God is to be denied to no person that is born : for, whereas our Lord in his Gospel says, ‘ The Son of man came not to destroy men’s souls, but to save them ;’ as far as lies in us, no soul, if possible, is to be lost. \* \*

“ That the eighth day was observed in the Jewish circumcision, was a type going before in shadow and resemblance ; but on Christ’s coming was fulfilled in the substance. For because the eighth day, that is, the next to the Sabbath day, was to be the day on which the Lord was to rise from the dead, and quicken us, and give us the spiritual circumcision ; this eighth day, that is, the next day to the Sabbath, or Lord’s day, was signified in the type before ; which type ceased

when the substance came, and the spiritual circumcision was given to us.

“ So that we judge that no person is to be hindered from obtaining the grace by the law that is now appointed, and that the spiritual circumcision ought not to be restrained by the circumcision that was according to the flesh ; but that all are to be admitted to the grace of Christ, since Peter, speaking in the Acts of the Apostles, says, ‘ The Lord has shewn me that no person is to be called common or unclean.

“ If any thing could be an obstacle to persons against their obtaining the grace, the adult, and grown, and elder men, would be rather hindered by their grievous sins. If, then, the greatest offenders, and they that have grievously sinned against God before, have, when they afterwards come to believe, forgiveness of their sins, and no person is kept off from baptism and the grace ; how much less reason is there to refuse an infant, who being newly born has no sin, save that being descended from Adam according to the flesh, he has from his very birth contracted the contagion of the death anciently threatened ? Who comes for this reason more easily to forgiveness of sins, because they are not his own but others’ sins that are forgiven him.

“ This therefore, dear brother, was our opinion in the Assembly, that it is not for us to hinder

any person from baptism and the grace of God, who is merciful, and kind, and affectionate, to all. Which rule, as it holds for all, so we think it more especially to be observed in reference to infants and persons newly born; to whom our help and the divine mercy is rather to be granted, because by their weeping and wailing at their first entrance into the world, they intimate nothing so much as that they implore compassion.

“ Dear brother, we wish you always good health.”

The reader will readily observe that the reasons which are assigned in the above letter for not delaying the baptism of infants until the eighth day are vain and frivolous: with these reasons, however, we have nothing to do. The practice of the African Church at this time is what we are desirous of discovering; and that it was usual for them to baptize infants, I hope no reasonable inquirer will entertain the slightest doubt. Here, then, was no dispute, or difference of opinion: for it is said that there was not one who thought, as Fidus did, that baptism must be delayed until the eighth day after the birth of the infant; much less was there any opinion that it was not to be used at all.

“ In a doctrinal point,” as Mr. Baxter well observes, “ a mistake is easier, or in a bare narration of some one fact: but in a matter of fact

of so public notice, and which so many thousands were partakers in, as baptism was, how could they be ignorant?"

We see in this letter, also, a confirmation of what I observed before, that baptism is to be regarded as in the room of circumcision. For it was upon that account that Fidus thought baptism ought to be solemnized on the same day which had been fixed for circumcision. And the bishops of this Council, though they deny the inference of Fidus, yet admit that baptism is spiritual [or Christian] circumcision.

I now invite the attention of the reader to another passage from the works of Cyprian. There had been at Carthage a great persecution of the Christians, in which many had apostatized and openly renounced Christianity, and had joined in the idolatrous sacrifices of Paganism; but afterwards, when the persecution had ceased, some of these persons betook themselves again to the places of worship, without first giving sufficient proof of the sincerity of their repentance for so dreadful a crime, or without waiting until the Church had given its consent for their readmission. St. Cyprian thought it necessary that these persons should first be made sensible of the guilt they had contracted; and for this purpose he wrote a book intitled *De Lapsis*, (i. e. Concerning those who had fallen from the faith,) wherein we find

the following passage, in which the reader will see that though Infant Baptism is not expressly mentioned, it is, nevertheless, plainly and pointedly alluded to.

“ When you came to the capitol (i. e. the idol temple), when you went with a ready compliance to the commission of that horrible crime, did not your limbs tremble, your sight wax dim, your heart sink, your arms hang powerless ? Was not your mind horror-smitten, did not your tongue falter, your speech fail you ? Could one that was the servant of God stand there, speak out, and renounce Christ, who had before renounced the devil and the world ? Did he not regard as his funeral pile, that altar which it was (spiritual) death to approach ? Was he not bound to shun, as a funeral fire which signified the forfeiture of his life, that altar of Satan, which he beheld smoking and fuming with a foetid odour ? What need hadst thou, poor soul ! to bring thy offering or sacrifice with thee ? thou camest thyself a sacrifice and victim to the altar. There didst thou sacrifice thy salvation ; thou didst consume all thy hope and faith in those deadly flames.

“ There were also a great number who thought it not enough to procure their own damnation, with mutual encouragement, the people rushed upon their own destruction. They drank death

to each other, and pledged one another in that poisonous cup.

“ And that nothing might be wanting to the measure of their wickedness, their little infants also being led, or brought, in their parents’ arms, lost that which they had obtained immediately after they were born. Will not they at the day of judgment say, *We did nothing of this, neither did we, forsaking the meat and cup of our Lord, run of our own accord to the partaking of those profane defilements. It was the apostacy of others that ruined us; we had our parents for our murderers. It was they who renounced for us the Church from being our Mother, and God from being our Father: when we being young and improvident, and not sensible of the greatness of the crime, were made partakers of the wickedness, we were ensnared by the treachery of others.*”

When St. Cyprian says above that *the infants lost* [or forfeited] that [gift, or grace,] which they had immediately after they were born, it is manifest that he means their baptism, or the benefits of it. And this was St. Augustine’s opinion, which he expressed on the following occasion: a person named Boniface had asked him, “ whether parents do their children that are baptized any hurt, when they carry them to the

heathen sacrifices to be cured of any illness : and, if they thereby do them no hurt, then how comes it to pass that the faith of the parents stands them in stead when they are baptized, and yet their apostacy afterwards should not be able to hurt them."

St. Augustine answers, that "*the force of that sacrament is such that he who is once regenerated by it cannot afterwards be entangled in the guilt of another person's sin, to which he does not consent.*" The faith and godly will of the parent in bringing his child to baptism is available, because the same Spirit, that sanctifies and regenerates the child, moves the parent to offer him in baptism. "The regenerating Spirit," says he, "is one and the same in the parents who bring him, and in the infant who is brought, and regenerated. And the guilt is not so communicated by another person's will, as the grace is communicated by the unity (or identity) of the Spirit."

" Yet," as he observes afterwards, " the parents or the guardians that endeavour thus to entangle their children or other infants in their sacrilege of the devil, are deservedly called spiritual murderers. For they do not, it is true, effect murder upon them ; but, as far as in them lies they are murderers, and we do with reason say to them, *Don't murder your infants.* So the Apostle says, ' Quench not (or

extinguish not) the Spirit : not that He can be extinguished ; but yet they are fitly called extinguishers of him, as much as in them lies, who would have him extinguished."

And in this place it is that he takes notice of this passage of St. Cyprian, and says :—“ In this sense that may be rightly understood what St. Cyprian wrote in his Epistle concerning ‘ the Lapsed,’ when, reproving those that had in the time of persecution sacrificed to idols, he says, ‘ And that nothing might be wanting to the measure of their wickedness, their little infants also being led or brought in their parents’ arms, lost that which they had obtained presently after they were born,’ &c. They lost it, he means, as far as concerns the wickedness of those by whom they were brought to lose it, in the will and purpose of those who committed so foul a wickedness against them. For if they had lost it indeed as to themselves, they would have continued as persons condemned by the sentence of God without any excuse ; which if St. Cyprian had thought to be so, he would not immediately have subjoined their excuse, saying, ‘ Will not they at the day of judgment, say,’ &c.”

Before I proceed to the testimony of Gregory Nazianzen, I must produce a species of evidence, which will have its proper weight with all who have any acquaintance with ecclesiastical history.

I mean the decrees of Councils. For two Councils were held about this time, that is, in the years 305, and 314, in which direct evidence is given of the practice of Pædobaptism. The first Council alluded to was that of Eliberis, in Spain, and the passage I am going to cite is in the 22nd Canon.

“ If any one go over from the Catholic Church to any heresy, and return again to the Church, it is resolved that penance be not denied to such a one; because he acknowledges his fault. Let him be in the state of penance for ten years, and after ten years he ought to be admitted to communion.

“ But if they were infants when they were carried over, inasmuch as it was not by their own fault that they sinned, they ought to be admitted instantly.”

Here, indeed, is no express mention of these infants having been baptized in the Catholic Church before they were carried over to the heretical sect; but inasmuch as they are said to be *carried over* from the Catholic Church, their baptism is, I think, plainly implied. Will the Baptists shew us how an infant can be introduced into a Church, or made a member of it, but by baptism? There is not in all the works of antiquity any evidence to shew that a person was called a member of the Church till he was baptized.

I believe that the date above assigned to this Council is not too early; there appears to be internal evidence in many of the Canons that we must not place it lower than about the year Anno Dom. 305, for those Canons enjoined penance upon those who had apostatized through fear of persecution; this is a plain proof that persecution raged at this time, at least in Spain: but every one knows that a little after this period persecution for the Christian religion ceased in all the world.

The other Council which I have referred to above, was that of Neocæsarea, which took place about Anno Dom. 314. Notwithstanding the absence of any express mention here of the baptism of infants, I am sure the reader, if he carefully examines the quotation, will be satisfied that the thing is implied. The learned Grotius, and the illustrious Jeremy Taylor, have both been convinced that the practice of Infant Baptism may be justly inferred from the following passage in the 6th Canon of this Council, which was given in answer to a question that had then been moved, Whether a woman with child, who desired to be baptized and become a Christian, might without inconvenience receive baptism before her delivery? The ground of the doubt was this:—When she was baptized, the unborn child seemed to some to be baptized along with

her, and therefore they were inclined to infer that the child need not afterwards be baptized for itself: this may be collected from the words of the Council :

“ A woman with child may be baptized when she pleases : for the mother in this matter communicates nothing to the child; because in the profession every one’s own resolution is declared, (or, because every one’s resolution at the profession is declared to be peculiar to himself.)”

Our opponents have drawn from this passage an inference favourable to their own views, and do not hesitate to affirm that both those that moved this doubt, and those who resolved it, must have held the baptism of Infants to be unlawful. “ For,” say they, “ those who scrupled the baptizing of a woman did so for this reason, because they thought that in so doing they baptized the child too ; which would have been no absurdity, if the baptism of an infant be lawful : it would have been only the doing of both under one. And the Council itself seems to grant that the baptizing of the child would be unlawful : which is plain from the reason they give for allowing the baptism of the woman, *because her baptism communicates nothing to the child.* And besides, the Fathers here determine that at the baptismal profession every person must declare his own choice or resolution ; which it is impossible for

the infant in the womb, or any other infant, to do."

But here the baptists totally misunderstand the meaning of those who moved the question, and of those who answered it. They, who entertained a doubt of the propriety of baptizing such a woman, did so for this reason: Because it would be a disputable case whether the child were to be accounted as baptized by its mother's baptism or not; and so, when the child was born, they would be in great perplexity whether they were to baptize it or not. For if they did, there would be danger that it would be baptized twice; and if they did not, it was doubtful whether it had any baptism at all. They therefore (those who put the question) had determined that the woman should stay until she was delivered; and then she might be baptized for herself, and the child for itself. But the bishops in Council (considering, perhaps, the danger of the woman's death in the mean time,) determined otherwise,—that she might be baptized if she thought proper; and that there was no ground for any perplexity about the baptism of the infant: since it was a plain case that the child is not to be accounted baptized by its mother's baptism. The issue of the dispute is this:—the Council say in this matter, what any one, whether Pædobaptist or Antipædobaptist would say, the words make neither for the

one nor the other. Now let us see whether we have any evidence to turn the balance ; let the reader remember that we are come to within sixty years of the time of St. Augustine and Pelagius ; and they, as I shall shew presently, declare that they never read or heard of any Christians who were against Infant Baptism. Now would it not be a strange thing to suppose that there should have been a Council so late as under the reign of Constantine, of which they had never read or heard ? No one can think that they had never heard of this Council, which was but a little time before their birth.

The testimony of Gregory Nazianzen comes next in order : he flourished about the year 260 after the age of the Apostles. This Christian Father was not himself baptized in his infancy ; and if it be true, that he was born after his father had embraced Christianity, and was in holy orders, (as the Antipædobaptists give us probable evidence,) he had the greatest reason of any one in those times to feel a prejudice against the doctrine of the necessity of Infant Baptism, which he could not urge himself, nor hear others urge, without casting a tacit reproach upon the conduct of his father, for whom he always expressed a great veneration and reverence : though ecclesiastical writers tell us that his father was a man of mean character and very slender abilities, and that it

required all the skill and prudence of the son to retrieve his fathers' credit with the people, and to preserve him from being overreached by the artifices, or terrified by the threats, of the Arian heretics. What I am now going to produce is from a Sermon of Gregory on Baptism, Orat. 40. He is speaking against the delay of baptism ; and thus specially replies to the pretences by which some lukewarm Christians attempted to justify their conduct in postponing the time of their baptism, as—

“ I am afraid I shall not keep the grace of baptism unstained, and so will not take my cleansing yet, as having none to take afterwards. O crafty imposture (says he) of the evil Spirit ! He is indeed darkness, yet he counterfeits light. When he does not prevail by open war, he lays his snares. When he cannot bring thee to despise baptism, he would cheat thee of it by overmuch caution. He assails all ages, and must be resisted in all. Art thou a youth ? Fight against pleasures and passions with this auxiliary strength, enlist thyself in the army of God, &c. Art thou aged ? let thy gray hairs hasten thee : strengthen thy old age with baptism, &c.—Hast thou an infant child ? let not wickedness have the advantage of time ; let him be sanctified [baptized] from his infancy ; let him be dedicated from his cradle to [or, by] the Spirit. Thou, as a faint-

hearted mother, and of little faith, art afraid of giving him the seal, because of the weakness of nature. Hannah, before Samuel was born, devoted him to God; and, as soon as he was born, consecrated him, and brought him up from the first in a priestly garment; not fearing for human infirmities, but trusting in God. Thou hast no need of amulets and charms, together with which the devil slides into the minds of shallow persons, drawing to himself the veneration that is due to God. Give to him the Trinity, that great and excellent preservative.—We must, therefore, make it our utmost care not to miss of the common grace. Some may say, Suppose this to hold in the case of those that can desire baptism; what say ye to those that are as yet infants, and are not in a capacity to be sensible either of the grace, or of the absence of it? Shall we baptize them too? Yes, by all means, if any danger make it requisite. For it is better that they be sanctified (i. e. baptized) without their own sense of it, than that they should die unsealed and uninitiated. And a ground of this to us is circumcision, which was given on the eighth day, and was a typical seal, (*or baptism,*) and was practised on those that had no use of reason; as also the anointing of the door-posts, which preserved the first-born by things that have no sense. As

for others, I give *my opinion* that they should stay three years, or thereabouts, when they are capable to hear and answer some of the holy words; and though they do not perfectly understand them, yet they form them; and that you then *sanctify* them in soul and body with the great sacrament of initiation. For though they are not liable to give account of their life before their reason be come to maturity, (they having this advantage by their age, that they are not forced to account for the faults they have committed in ignorance,) yet by reason of those sudden and unexpected assaults of dangers that are by no endeavours to be prevented, it is by all means advisable that they be secured by the Laver (of Baptism.)”

Gregory and Tertullian are the only two that speak of delaying baptism at all; one until the age of reason, the other until the age of three years. Both are to be understood, where there is no danger of death in the mean while: which opinion of Gregory is expressed here; that of Tertullian I have already noticed.

I may observe, likewise, that Gregory uses in this oration (as he frequently does in his other works) the word *ἀγιασθηναι*, *to be sanctified*, or *made holy*, for baptism. So did Cyprian, as I have already shewn, and so did the ancients gene-

rally. Mr. Walker\* has, with much industry and accuracy, produced quotations from almost all the ancient writers of the Christian Church, to shew that this was with them a common expression, to say, an infant or other person was *sanctified*, when they would imply that it was baptized. The Scripture uses the word in the same sense in 1 Cor. vi. 11 ; Ephes. v. 26.

Let us now consider the testimony of St. Basil. This Father, also, applies himself earnestly to the correction of that error which so generally prevailed in his time, of putting off the ceremony of baptism : this practice is still kept up by the Baptists, though I admit they do not defend it upon such improper grounds as those who are blamed for it by the early Fathers : the thing itself, however, is wrong ; and the Baptists of the present day have no reason to applaud themselves for giving a better reason than their predecessors for a bad practice. In a hortatory address of St. Basil on the subject of baptism generally, he says, with reference to those delays :

“ Do you demur and loiter and put it off ? when you have been from a child catechized in the word, are you not yet acquainted with the truth ? Having been always learning it, are you not yet come to the knowledge of it ? A seeker

\* Modest Plea for Infant Baptism. Cambridge, 1677.  
12mo.

all your life long ; a considerer until you are old : When will you be made a Christian ? When shall we see you become one of us ? Last year you were for staying until this year ; and now you have a mind to stay until next. Take heed, lest, by promising yourself a longer life, you do not quite miss of your hope. You don't know what change tomorrow may bring."

I give this passage in order that I may disarm our opponents of the advantage they are willing to derive from what they think a decisive evidence in it, in favour of their cause. This quotation, they will say, affords a plain proof that a considerable part of St. Basil's congregation were such as had, *from their childhood*, been instructed in the Christian religion, and, though born, as we may justly suppose, of Christian parents, yet were not baptized. But the truth is, as Mr. Wall well observes, there were at this time abundance of people who were well-wishers to Christianity, half Christians, who yet put off their absolute owning of it, or being baptized into it for a great many years. These men had, during their irresolute state of mind, several children ; and they could not, with any face or conscience, desire of the Church baptism for these their infant children, unless they would first find it in their hearts to accept it for themselves. And so then children came to be taught the doctrine of Christianity,

and yet were not baptized into it ; because their parents, though they liked and approved of that religion, were not at present fully resolved themselves : But where is there proof in the above passage that *any Christians, after they were once baptized themselves, ever suffered their infant children to go without baptism?* This plan, therefore, affords an answer to the objection drawn from itself, or from any others that speak of children instructed in religion, and yet not baptized.

He goes on :

—“A Jew does not delay circumcision, because of the threatening that ‘every soul that is not circumcised the eighth day shall be cut off from his people.’ And dost thou put off the ‘circumcision made without hands in the putting off the flesh,’ which is performed in baptism, when thou hearest our Lord himself say, ‘Verily, verily, I say unto you, except one be born of water and of the Spirit, he shall not enter into the kingdom of God?’ If Israel had not passed through the sea, they had not got rid of Pharaoh ; and unless thou pass through the water, thou wilt not be delivered from the cruel tyranny of the devil. Are you young? guard your youth with the bridle of baptism. Is the flower of your age passed ? Do not endanger the loss of your *Viaticum*. Do not miss of your preservative : Do not think of your ‘eleventh hour,’ as if it were your first.

"I know your reason, though you think to conceal it. 'Wait a little longer,' say you, 'I will make use of the flower of my age in pleasure, &c. and then, when I have enough of that, I will give it over and be baptized.' Think you that God does not see your purpose, or that he will give his grace to so wicked a heart? — If you leave off your sins for old age, thanks to your inability."

It is not hard to discover why they who deferred their own baptism should not be solicitous about the baptism of their infant children: the way to reform the omission of the latter duty was to correct the conduct which led to that omission; and this St. Basil sets heartily to do with earnestness and effect.

But the most material evidence we can collect of the sentiments of St. Basil is from his practice; of which there is an authentic record given by Theodoret and other historians, who lived a little after St. Basil; the narrative is in reference to the baptism of a child of Valens the Emperor. This Emperor was an Arian, and being urged by the Arian party to take an oath that he would always maintain their faith, and persecute the Catholics, did accordingly; he particularly afflicted the Catholic bishops; especially St. Basil, who was bishop of Cæsarea in Cappadocia. But being visited with great afflictions in his family, which

looked like judgments ; and, amongst the rest, his only child being sick, and at the point of death, he was moved, partly by the guilt of his conscience, and partly by the entreaties of his Queen, to abate his severity against St. Basil, who was universally regarded as a good and pious man : he also sent for him to come and pray for his child. ‘And, then,’ says Theodoret, ‘the great Basil coming into the palace, and seeing the Emperor’s son at the point of death, undertook that he would recover if he had baptism given him by the hands of the godly, (meaning the Catholics) and having said this he went away. But he (the emperor) remembering, like foolish Herod, his oath, commanded some that were present, of Arian’s party, to baptize the child, &c.’

The issue was, the child died, and Valens for the present repented both of his oath and cruelty, and went to St. Basil’s church, and made his oblations : but he afterwards returned to his former disposition.

All that is doubtful in this passage is, whether this child were so young as to entitle his baptism to be considered Infant Baptism, or whether he were of such an age as to be capable of being baptized upon his own profession. Theodoret calls him *παιδίον*, which properly signifies a little child or infant : and is the same word which is used, Mark, x. 13. *προσέφερον παιδία*, *They brought*

*young children*, and Matt. ii. 11. εὗρον τὸ παιδίον, *They found the young child*. Gregory Nazianzen says,\* that he was present with St. Basil in the palace at that time, and he compares the Emperor's afflicting himself for his child to David's lamentation for his, under similar circumstances; but he does not mention the age. Socrates† calls him νήπιον νιον τὸ Οὐάλεντος. *The infant son of Valens*. Valesius, the learned commentator, has endeavoured to ascertain, by chronological investigation, the age of this child when he died. The upshot of his calculation is that he was six years old.‡ Now if he were even so old, still he must be baptized with the form of Infant Baptism; for a child of six years old is capable of no other.

The two passages which I have to produce from St. Ambrose are short, but they are conclusive. In the former, he is commenting upon these words (Luke, i. 17.): “He shall go before him in the spirit and power of Elias:” where the angel is prophesying of John the Baptist. And after having shewn in several particulars how John, in his office, resembled Elias, and having mentioned that miracle of the latter, by which he divided the river Jordan; he adds these words:

\* Orat. in Basilium.

† Hist. lib. iv. c. 26.

‡ Annot. in Socrat. lib. iv. c. 10. it. 26.

“ But perhaps they may seem to be fulfilled in our time, and in the time of the Apostles ; for that returning of the waters of the river backward towards the spring head, which was caused by Elias when the river was divided (as the Scripture says, ‘ Jordan was driven back’) signified the sacrament of the laver of salvation, which was afterwards to be instituted ; by which those infants that are baptized are reformed back again from wickedness, [or a wicked state,] to the primitive state of their nature.” \*

He means that they were freed from the guilt of original sin, and in some sense restored to the primitive state in which man was before the Fall. He plainly speaks here of infants as baptized in the Apostles’ time, as well as in his own : and makes St. John, in baptizing infants for the reformation of their nature back again to the primitive purity of it, to resemble Elias, in turning back the waters to their spring head.

In the other passage, to which I referred above, St. Ambrose is speaking of the history of Abraham, when he is commanded to be circumcised, and to circumcise his infants, and of the severity of the penalty on an infant that is not circumcised. Here follow his words in relation to circumcision :—

\* This passage is quoted by St. Augustine, lib. i. contra Julian, c. 2.

“ For a very good reason does the law command the males to be circumcised in the beginning of infancy, even the bondslave born in the house : because, as circumcision is from infancy, so is the disease. No time ought to be void of the remedy, because none is void of guilt,” &c. And a little after :— “ Neither a proselyte that is old, nor an infant born in the house is excepted ; because every age is obnoxious to sin, and therefore every age is proper for the sacrament.” And, citing these words of our Lord, ‘ For unless any person be born again of water, and of the Holy Spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God,’ he says, “ You see, he excepts no person, not an infant, not one that is not hindered by any unavoidable accident.” Words cannot more strongly and plainly shew St. Ambrose’s sense of the necessity of baptizing infants.

St. John Chrysostom, whose evidence we are now to consider, has left us more extensive remains than any of his predecessors : this is owing rather to the superior character of his writings, than to his greater skill and soundness in theology : his beautiful and mellifluous style of composition obtained for him the name of Chrysostom, *Golden tongue* ; and it is said that the people who used to hear him were accustomed to declare that *they had rather the sun would not shine, than that John should not preach.* Many, however, of

his works are lost, and to make up the deficiency a number of spurious productions were, in the dark ages, put forth under his name: but the industry and skill of the latter ages, and particularly of Sir Henry Savile, have, in a great degree, distinguished the genuine from the counterfeit.

The passages which I shall adduce shall be carefully extracted only from those works which are undoubtedly the productions of Chrysostom himself; and here I would observe, that the style and character of the writer forbids us to expect many allusions to the subject of baptism, which, being a theme that is not very susceptible of rhetorical embellishment, would naturally be declined by a writer, whose chief aim was to select such themes as were capable of being decorated by the orator with all the blandishments of his favourite art.

*Hom. 40 in Genesin. Edit. Savil. T. 1.* Chrysostom had been speaking of circumcision; and observes how much more favourable and bountiful God is to Christians, in the baptism which he has appointed them instead of the Jewish rite: he thus proceeds:

“ There was pain and trouble in the practice of that, and no other advantage accruing from the circumcision than this only, that by this sign

they were known and distinguished from other nations ; but our circumcision, I mean the grace of baptism, gives cure without pain, and procures us a thousand benefits, and fills us with the grace of the Spirit ; and it has no determinate time, as that had ; but one that is in the very beginning of his age, or one that is in the middle of it, or one that is in his old age, may receive this circumcision made without hands : in which there is no trouble to be undergone, but to throw off the load of sins, and receive pardon for all foregoing offences."

I have observed that this Father is not to be considered as a very deep or sound divine, notwithstanding his unquestionable oratorical talents ; and the reader will have observed a proof of my remark in the quotation which he has just read ; for what can be more unsound and unscriptural than to say, as he does in the above passage, that circumcision had no spiritual import, but was only a badge of national distinction ! The Scriptures, and the Fathers also, generally speak of it as *the seal\* of the righteousness of faith that Abraham had*, and the covenant,† or *seal of the covenant*, which God made with him and his seed : and surely this contains something more than

\* Rom. iv. 11,

† Acts, vii. 11.

that the Jews should be distinguished from other nations ; it was that *He would be their God, and they his people.*\*

To say, also, that circumcision could signify nothing to the soul, because it was given in infancy, in the very place where he is attempting to prove that baptism (which, as he himself grants, may also be given in infancy) conveys so many spiritual blessings, betrays a strange and unwar-rantable forgetfulness of what he had said before.

But it is more to our present purpose to ob-serve the other difference which he makes : “ Cir-cumcision was to be given on the eighth day, but baptism has no determinate time ; but it is lawful for one in infancy, or one in middle age, or one in old age, to receive it.” And was it not just the same in circumcision ? If circumcision had been omitted in infancy, or if the person who came over to the Jewish religion were a heathen in middle age, or in old age, circumcision was given them, rather than not at all.

Or shall we say that his meaning is, that a Jew was obliged to circumcise his child in infancy, but that a Christian parent might baptize his child in infancy, if he thought proper ; or, if he pleased, might let it alone to be done in middle age, or even in old age ? His expressions, as they stand in the

\* Gen. xvii. 7.

above passage, are, indeed, capable of such an interpretation; but this is not reconcileable with what he says in other places of the necessity of baptism, and the danger in case a person should die without it; which would often happen to children if it were so deferred. He often speaks to this purpose, as in Hom. i. "There is no receiving or having the bequeathed inheritance before one is baptized;" and "None can be called a son until he is baptized." St. Augustine\* quotes a saying of Chrysostom's to this purpose in his disputes with Julian the apostate, where Augustine is proving that Chrysostom, as well as other Catholic writers, admitted the doctrine of original sin; which Julian denied, although he owned the baptism of infants: Augustine's words are these: "The same holy John, even he as well as the Martyr Cyprian, teaches that the circumcision of the flesh was commanded in the way of a type of baptism." Then he recites the following words as from Chrysostom:—"A Jew does not delay circumcision because of the threatening, &c. and dost thou delay the circumcision made *without hands*," &c. Then St. Augustine adds, "You see how this man, established in the ecclesiastical doctrine, compares circumcision to baptism, and threat to threat; that *the not being circumcised*

\* L 2. contra Julianum. c. 9.

*on the eighth day, is the not being baptized in Christ ; and the being cut off from his people, is the not entering into the kingdom of Heaven.* And you (Pelagians) say that in the baptism of infants there is no putting off of the flesh, i. e. no circumcision made without hands ; when you affirm that there is nothing which needs to be put off : for you do not confess them to be dead *in the uncircumcision of the flesh*, by which is meant *sin*, especially that sin which is deemed original ; for by reason of this our body is *the body of sin*,\* which the Apostle says *is destroyed by the cross of Christ.*"

There is another passage in a Homily of St. Chrysostom " To the Baptized," which is not now extant in Greek ; but is cited by Julian in Latin, and by St. Augustine in Greek, which are full and decisive in proof of Infant Baptism. The passages are in St. Augustine's *First Book against Julian* ; where Julian says :—

" Holy John, Bishop of Constantinople, denies that there is any original sin in infants ; for in that Homily which he preached concerning " baptized persons," he says,—“ Blessed be God, who only doeth wonders, who has created and ordered all things. Lo ! they enjoy the serenity of freedom, who but even now were held in thral-

\* Rom. vi. 6.

dom, they are become citizens of the Church; who were in the wandering state of aliens, and they are entered into the lot of the righteous, who were under the confusion of sin. For they are not only free, but saints ; nor saints only, but justified ; and not only justified, but sons ; and not only sons, but heirs ; not heirs only, but brothers of Christ ; not only his brethren, but co-heirs ; not co-heirs only, but members of him ; not members only, but his temple ; and not his temple only, but organs of his Spirit. You see how many are the benefits of baptism, and yet some think that the heavenly grace consists only in forgiveness of sins ; but I have reckoned up ten advantages of it. *For this cause we baptize infants also, though they are not defiled with sin ;* that there may be superadded to their saintship, righteousness, adoption, inheritance, a brotherhood with Christ, and to be made members of him."

This passage was brought forward by Julian to shew that it was Chrysostom's opinion that infants were baptized, not for forgiveness of sins, from which he held them to be free, but only that they might have a right to Christ's kingdom ; which was just what Julian and his party, who denied original sin, would maintain. And, indeed, it was a powerful passage in Julian's favour : and St. Augustine was much perplexed by the difficulty he found in attempting to reconcile it to any

sound and Catholic sense : he makes use of three ways to do so :

1st. He shews how improbable it was that Chrysostom, living in the Catholic Church, being a renowned bishop in it, should really hold a doctrine so contrary to that which he himself had shewn, by numerous examples, to be the general opinion of the Fathers of the Christian Church.

2d. He produces other passages from his writings, in which the orthodox doctrine of original sin is distinctly asserted.

3rd. As to the place itself, he shews that Julian had not translated the words accurately, but had given them a turn to his own advantage : for whereas the words are in the Greek, “ though they have not any sins,” Julian had made use of a faulty Latin translation, in which some copies read, *not defiled with sins*; others *with sin*, in the singular number. Of which last copy St. Augustine says, “ I doubt some of your party have chosen to express it in the singular number, that it might be taken for that *one sin* of which the Apostle speaks,\* *Judgment came by one [sin] to condemnation; but the free gift is of many offences unto justification.* You choose to express it, *not defiled with sin*: that one sin of the first man might come into the reader’s mind,

\* Rom. v. 16.

“ But not to go by suspicions, and supposing this to be the mistake of the transcriber, or the alteration of the interpreter, I will set down the Greek words themselves, which John spake,  $\Delta\mu\alpha\tau\eta\mu\alpha\tau\alpha\ kai\ \tau\alpha\ \pi\alpha\delta\alpha\ \beta\alpha\pi\tau\iota\zeta\omega\mu\epsilon\nu\ kai\tau\omega\ \acute{a}\mu\alpha\pi\tau\iota\mu\alpha\tau\alpha$   $\mu\eta\ \acute{\epsilon}\chi\omega\nu\tau\alpha$ , which is, *For this reason we baptize infants also, though they have not any sins.* You see he did not say that infants are not defiled with sin, or sins; but that they have not any sins: understand it of THEIR OWN, and there is no dispute. But you will ask, Why did he not say, *of their own?* Why do you think? but for this reason, because he, discoursing in the Catholic Church, supposed that he could be understood in no other sense? No one was puzzled about the matter. You (Pelagians) not having then raised any controversy, he spake with less caution.”

Upon this answer of St. Augustine, Mr. Wall\* makes this just observation, “that the Greek writers, though they own this natural corruption, yet do not generally by the property of their language call it by the name of *sin*; but they express by the name of *natural defilement, pollution, disease*, and the like, that which the Latins call *original sin*. The word  $\acute{a}\mu\alpha\pi\tau\iota\mu\alpha$ , and especially  $\acute{a}\mu\acute{a}\pi\tau\eta\mu\alpha$  do properly with them signify an

\* History of Infant Baptism. p. 95.

*actual sin or transgression.* So Theodoret, who lived a little after these times, and consequently ought to speak with more caution, and was no favourer of Pelagianism, speaks thus ; *Baptism is not (as the silly Messalians say) a razor only to cut off sins that are past, which it does over and above. For if it had not other effect than that, what need we baptize infants, that have not tasted of SIN ? The sacrament promises not only this, but greater and higher things ; for it is a pledge of future blessings, a type of the resurrection, a communication of Christ's passion, &c.*

“ And this is made more plain by the phrase used by Isidorus Pelusiota, (who, as well as Theodoret, was a disciple of St. Chrysostom, and both of them followers of his doctrine, and imitators, as far as they could, of his expressions :) for he, at the same place, speaks of infants as not having any sin, and yet being defiled with the corruption caused by Adam's transgression ; his words are :

“ Whereas your Excellency wrote to me, desiring to know for what reason infants, that have no sin are baptized, [βρέφη ἀναμαρτημάτα ὄντα βαπτίζεται,] I have thought it needful to give you my answer. Some that speak below the dignity of the subject say, it is that they may wash off that pollution, ρύπον, which is transmitted upon human nature by the transgression of Adam. I also do believe that that is done ;

but not that only (for that were not so great a matter,) but that a great many other graces, far transcending our nature, are thereby given.' And John goes on to reckon up redemption, regeneration, adoption, &c., much to the same purpose as Chrysostom does.

" This shews that, in their way of speaking, infants, (though acknowledged to have a pollution of nature from Adam, which needed washing off,) yet were said not to have ἀμαρτίας, or ἀμαρτήματα, sins. And even those commendations of baptism, and the effects of it in infants, that it is redemption, regeneration, &c., do suppose an evil state from which they are redeemed, regenerated, &c. which state is the same that the Latins call original sin."

But let this question of criticism be determined which way it will, St. Chrysostom speaks plainly of the *practice* of Infant Baptism. And all we are desirous of knowing at present is, what was, in their times, the practice of the Christian Church ? With the clear or just understanding of the Fathers in reference to this rite we have nothing to do; and if we find that they held to the practice, notwithstanding a very erroneous or even absurd opinion of the reason upon which it is grounded, that is so far from weakening the effect of their testimony, that it strongly confirms it; since it shews that the best reason they could give

for maintaining the custom was, that it always obtained in the Church down to their times.

I will give only two more passages from this writer ; the one is from the 23rd Homily on the Acts of the Apostles. He is there lamenting that evil inclination, and that aversion to a godly life, which so generally prevails among mankind, which keeps from baptism those that are not baptized, and perverts from a holy course of life even those who have already received it. And on that head he says :

“ The Catechumens being of this mind (i. e. having this aversion) take no care of a godly life. And those that are baptized, some of them forasmuch as they were children when they received it, and because they received it in a fit of sickness, having no mind to live righteously, shew no good inclination : and they who received it in their health shew but very little : having been for the present zealously affected, afterwards they let even this fit of zeal go out.”

Here it plainly appears that some of the persons whom he addresses (viz. those that had been born of Christian baptized parents,) had been baptized in infancy ; and some of them (viz. those who had embraced Christianity in their adult age) had been baptized since : and some of the latter sort were not yet baptized.

The last passage I shall quote from this writer

does not mention baptism in express terms ; but it plainly refers to the custom of making on the infant's forehead the sign of the cross at his baptism : it is in the 12th Homily on the First Epistle to the Corinthians, where he is blaming the women for several superstitious and heathenish rites which they practised upon their new-born infants. One was a custom which they had of rubbing the forehead of the child with a sort of mixture which they prepared with certain magical incantations, the object of which was to serve as an amulet to the infant. He tells them that such a practice, instead of protecting and purifying the babe, makes it abominable ; his words are :

“ He that anoints an infant so with that stuff, how can he think but that it makes it abominable ? How can he bring it to the hands of the priest ? Tell me, how can you think it fitting for the minister to make the sign on its forehead, when you have besmeared it with that stuff ? ”

The baptists generally point with apparent satisfaction to the few and incidental, and, as they think, indirect allusions to Infant Baptism, which we find in the history of the Christian Church from the era of the Apostles to the latter part of the time of St. Jerome and St. Augustine ; and though they willingly accompany their opponents so far in the scrutiny which is made into the evidence collected from this period of history,

they suddenly stop here, and decline to accompany their fellow inquisitors any further : this is done by our Baptist brethren for a politic reason, which it is now time for me to explain. Hitherto, (that is to say, until the beginning of the fifth century) we have no evidence whatever of the appearance of any *heretical party* in the Church, which held opinions that in any shape tended to bring the question of Infant Baptism into close and prominent discussion ; nothing had been started by any set of men which compelled the doctors of the Catholic Church to turn their <sup>most</sup> attention or their pens to this subject. I do not say that no *individual* ever broached an opinion which contradicted the testimony of the Holy Scripture, or the faith and practice of the Church upon this point ; for we have already seen that Tertullian is chargeable with errors respecting this subject : but I affirm that we have no evidence to prove that his opinion became the distinguishing tenet of any *sect* of professing Christians before the time we are approaching. But now an event occurred which frequently forced the subject of paedobaptism upon the consideration of the writers of the Church ; and this was the well-known heresy of Pelagius against the doctrine of original sin : the disputes about this matter filled the whole world, so that the arguments which the Catholics drew from the baptism of infants for

original sin, and the answer of the Pelagians to them, made a considerable part of the disputes which then occupied the attention, and disturbed the tranquility, of the Christian Church. And here the occasion demanded a constant reference to paedobaptism, and that reference repeatedly, distinctly, and triumphantly, establishes the fact about which we are inquiring. Our Baptist associates, therefore, who have condescended to accompany us to this point, here suddenly take their leave of us, and desire to be excused from pursuing the investigation any further! The effulgence of truth, the blaze of evidence, is too strong for their eyes, and they have not the courage or the candour to face it.

St. Jerome and St. Augustine, as I have already hinted, lived to see and to take a share in those disputes ; but they had each of them written several works before that controversy commenced. Let the reader bear these facts in mind : they will tend to explain and illustrate the several citations which I am going to produce from the writings of these two illustrious Fathers of the Church. I shall first quote those passages which occur in the writings that were published before the Pelagian controversy ; as it will be expedient to consider them apart from those which were published afterwards. It must be recollected that when the passages which immediately follow were written,

no question had been moved concerning the practice of paedobaptism.

The first passage is from St. Jerome's Seventh Letter to Leta, concerning the education of her daughter. He is there admonishing that lady of the solemn obligation that lay upon her to attend to the instruction of her child, and telling her that God requires of parents an account of the misconduct of the child, when that is owing to their mismanagement; and says :

“ Eli the priest brought upon himself the anger of God for the faults of his children. He must not be a bishop that has children riotous or unruly. On the other hand it is written of a woman,\* *That she shall be saved in [or, by] childbearing, if they continue in faith, and charity, and holiness, with sobriety.* If their mature age when they are at their own disposal be imputed to their parents, how much more the time of their infancy and tender years ; which, as the Scripture says, is not able to distinguish the right hand from the left : that is, knows not the difference between good and evil.” Then follows this objection : *And how is it true, you will ask, that the sins of the fathers are not imputed to the children, nor those of the children to the fathers, but, The soul that sinneth, it shall die ?*

\* 1 Tim. ii. 15.

“ This is said of those that have understanding ; of such as he was, of whom it is written in the Gospel, *He is of age, let him speak for himself.* But he that is a child, and thinks as a child (till such time as he comes to years of discretion, and Pythagoras’s letter Y leads him to the place where the road parts into two) his good deeds, as well as his evil deeds, are imputed to his parents. Unless you will think that the children of Christians are themselves only under the guilt of sin, if they do not receive baptism ; and that the wickedness is not imputed to those also who would not give it them ; especially at that time when they that were to receive it could make no opposition against the receiving it.”

St. Jerome calls himself an old man in one part of this epistle ; yet it was written a great while (thirty years at least) before his death, and twenty years before Pelagius vented his new opinion.

St. Augustine, when he was young a man, wrote a book concerning *Free-will*; the occasion of it was the heresy of the Manichees, who maintained that there is one eternal principle, or God, who made the soul, and all good things ; and there is another being, who made the body, and is the author of all evil : and that both these beings proceed from a necessary principle. St. Augustine, in this work, shews that God created man with a free-will, and that all sin comes from the ill use of that

free-will ; and after having reconciled his doctrine with the fact of many infants suffering severe bodily pains and death, although they had not come to the exercise of free-will, he proceeds to meet an objection of his adversaries.

“ Men are wont to ask this question too, What good the sacrament of Christ’s baptism does to infants ? Whereas after they have received it, they often die before they are able to understand any thing of it. As to that matter, it is piously and truly believed that the faith of those by whom the child is offered to be consecrated profits the child, and is commanded by the sound authority of the Church ; and hence every person may judge how profitable his own faith will be to himself, when even another person’s faith is useful for the advantage of those that have as yet none of their own. For how could the widow’s son\* be benefited by his own faith, since, being dead, he could have none ? And yet his mother’s faith availed for his being raised to life again.”

St. Augustine ably maintained a controversy with the Donatists, a numerous party in Africa, who had revolted from the communion of the Church, on account of an ill opinion they had conceived of a bishop named Cecilian, whose misconduct, as they thought, vitiated the communion

\* Luke, vii. 12.

with which he was connected, and annulled the efficacy of the sacraments which were administered in it. They, therefore, maintained that all who came over from the Church to their party ought to be re-baptized. In his work against these schismatics, St. Augustine shews that supposing all the accusations which they alleged against Cecilian were true, yet a church is not to be forsaken, because one or more wicked men are suffered to remain in it: and he particularly sets forth the impiety of their practice in re-baptizing. He shews that baptism, once given in the right form, is valid, how heretical or impure soever the Church may be in which it is administered. He shews that baptism is Christ's, and not the minister's; and that the validity of it depends on God's authority, not on the goodness or sincerity of the person who officiates. In the twenty-third chapter, having had occasion to speak of the Penitent Thief, who obtained salvation, although he had not been baptized, he shews that that is no more an argument against the necessity of baptism, where it may be had, than the example of baptized infants obtaining salvation without faith, is an argument against the necessity of faith in those who are capable of believing: but that it is an argument that one of these may be without the other. He says:

“ And as the Thief, who by necessity went

without baptism, was saved ; because by his piety he had it spiritually ; so where baptism is had, though the party by necessity go without that (faith) which the Thief had, yet he is saved.

“ Which the whole body of the Church holds, as delivered to them in the case of little infants baptized ; who certainly cannot yet believe with the heart to righteousness, or confess with the mouth to salvation as the thief did ; nay, by their crying and noise, while the sacrament is administering, they disturb the holy mysteries ; and yet no Christian will say that they are baptized to no purpose.

“ And if any one ask for divine authority in this matter, though that which the *whole* Church practices, and which has not been instituted by councils, but was ever in use, is very reasonably believed to be no other than a thing delivered by the authority of the Apostles ; yet we may besides take a true estimate, how much the sacrament of baptism avails infants by the circumcision which God’s former people received. For *Abraham* was justified before he received that, as *Cornelius* was endued with the Holy Spirit before he was baptized ; and yet the Apostle says of Abraham that he *received the gift of circumcision a seal of the righteousness of the faith*, by which he had in heart believed, *and it had been counted to him for righteousness*. Why then was he commanded

thenceforward to circumcise all his male infants on the eighth day, when they could not yet believe with the heart that it might be counted to them for righteousness, but for this reason, because the sacrament of itself is of great importance?"

Though St. Augustine's allusion to Infant Baptism in the above passage is only incidental, yet we see that the evidence it affords is full and decisive that it was then *universally* practised, and had been so beyond the memory of man, or of any existing record: they looked upon it as a thing which had not been enacted by any council, but had ever been in use from the beginning of Christianity: and this, too, at a period when they had to look back only for three hundred years to the time of the Apostles.

The last and strongest evidence which we derive in support of paedobaptism from the writings of the Fathers of the Church, is that which we collect from the discussions which were produced by the celebrated Pelagian heresy. No author has treated of this evidence with greater industry, or at greater length, than the learned Mr. Wall, in his "History of Infant Baptism;" to which I refer those who are desirous of seeing all that can be produced upon this point; but in a work of this extent it would not be possible, nor indeed would it be necessary, to give more than a few of those

powerful and decisive testimonies in which that portion of Ecclesiastical history abounds; especially, as in weighing the force of evidence, it is not the number so much as the character and selection of the witnesses which satisfies a candid mind in determining a question that is decided by witnesses to any matter of fact.

The author of the heresy of which I have spoken was Pelagius, a monk, assisted by another monk, named Celestius. Pelagius was a native of Wales,\* and was the only person of the ancient *British* Church who ever distinguished himself in the Roman world : he resided for a considerable time in Rome, in great credit and esteem for piety, genius, and learning. He had travelled over the greatest part of the civilized world, and, being a man of acute and extensive observation and research, no one was better acquainted with the state of the Church, both at the time he lived, and from the earliest period. Even they who condemned his opinions owned the extent and depth of his understanding, and the brilliancy of his talents: his works are nearly all lost ; and of the few that remain, I have never heard that any have been translated into our language. He opposed the doctrine of original sin and natural

\* He is supposed to have been called in his own country, *Morgan*, a name which has the same meaning in the British language as Pelagius in Greek, i.e. *belonging to the sea*.

corruption, by which persons are supposed to be born under the stain and guilt of sin; because he thought that these doctrines cast a reflection upon the honour and justice of God; and that argument was plausible among the vulgar. As a consequence of these tenets, he maintained that the baptism of infants was not for any sin they had committed, or for any guilt they had derived from their parents, but to gain for them admittance into "the kingdom of Heaven." For he held that children, though they were not baptized, should have an immortal and happy life; not in the kingdom of Heaven, indeed; because our Lord (John, iii. 5.) had determined the contrary; but somewhere; in what place he knew not. These opinions are briefly stated by St. Augustine, in the 88th chapter of his book "On Heresies."

The acknowledgment, therefore, of Pelagius that Infant Baptism was practised in the Christian Church, and that he never heard of any who did not hold it, is a most important concession; for the testimony of this writer reaches not only to the time of his own experience and observation, but backward through the preceding centuries of the Christian Church, whose practice in this respect he must have thoroughly known: for his particular tenets imposed upon him the embarrassing task of reconciling them with the known practice of paedobaptism, with which they seem

to be totally inconsistent. Whereas if he could have alleged, with truth or likelihood, that Infant Baptism was an innovation, a practice which could not be defended upon Apostolical authority, how gladly would he have said so, and so have at once released his own opinions from the perplexing weight of that universal practice, which hung as a millstone about the neck of his peculiar dogma ! He must have spared no pains, therefore, to search and scrutinize every record which could afford him the slightest evidence of the unauthorized introduction and imposition of the rite of paedobaptism. We may, therefore, regard Pelagius as an ardent friend and partisan of the Baptists, living in the early age of the Church of Christ, and watching and searching with the most scrupulous care and diligence for every evidence he could procure against our practice ; and that, too, under circumstances most favourable for the complete detection of any fraud and imposture. What success he had I have already partly stated, and from what I shall now adduce the reader will amply and satisfactorily discover.

About the year 412, St. Augustine wrote his first treatise against the Pelagians. The opinions of Pelagius and Celestius were much spoken of at Carthage, where these two persons had been, and Marcellinus, a nobleman residing in that city, sent to Augustine to ask his opinion concerning

the difficulties raised about their doctrines. It was in compliance with that desire that he wrote two books, and, a little time afterwards, a third book (or, epistle,) entitled, *Of the guilt and forgiveness of Sins, and of the Baptism of Infants.* The scope of these writings is to prove that the doctrine of original sin is true, and that chiefly FROM THE BAPTISM OF INFANTS, and to assert the necessity of God's grace, and, finally, to answer objections.

In the first book he treats of the state of Adam before and after his fall, proves that his offspring derive sin from him, not by *imitation* only (as the Pelagians said) but by *propagation*; that this propagated corruption is in all persons, even in infants who have no actual sin.

He proves this, first, by texts of Scripture; then, by other arguments: and among the rest, by this, *that infants were by all Christians acknowledged to stand in need of baptism;* which must be in them for original sin, since they have no other. He then mentions and replies to some answers which those who denied original sin gave to this last argument, which pressed them very hard.

1. Some said that infants have actual sin; meaning their peevishness, &c. and that they have need to be baptized for that. These men he judges unworthy of any answer here, as arguing

against plain sense ; yet, at the end of the book, he devotes some time to a refutation of their objections.

2. Some said, They are baptized, not for forgiveness of sin, but that they may be made “ heirs of the kingdom of Heaven.” It is to be observed that the Pelagians held a middle state between Heaven and Hell. “ These men,” says Augustine, “ if they be asked whether infants, not baptized, and not made heirs of the kingdom, have yet the benefit of eternal salvation at the resurrection of the dead, are at a great plunge, and can find no way out of it. For what Christian can endure to hear it said, that any person may come to eternal salvation that is not regenerated in Christ, which he has ordered to be done by baptism !” &c.

And, inasmuch as those men distinguished between salvation, and the kingdom of Heaven, and said children might be *saved* without baptism, though they could not come to the kingdom of Heaven, he brings in that text, Titus, iii. 5, “ He saved us by the washing of regeneration,” &c., and then he proceeds, “ who dares to affirm that infants may be saved without that regeneration, as if Christ had not died for them ? For Christ died for sinners ; and if these who, ’tis plain, have committed no sin in their own life, are not held captive under the *original* bond of sin neither ;

how did Christ, who died for sinners, die for them ? If they are not diseased with any sickness of original sin, why are they carried to Christ the Physician, to receive the sacrament of their eternal salvation, by the godly fear of their friends, who run with them to it ? Why is it not said to them in the Church, *Carry back from hence those innocent creatures : The whole have no need of a physician, but they that are sick : Christ came not to call the righteous, but sinners ?* So strange a thing never was said, never is said, never will be said in the Church of Christ."

But, alas ! St. Augustine, though a good divine, was a bad prophet ; for had he lived to our times, he would have discovered, to his astonishment and sorrow, that some who profess to be Christians have said that which he thought too absurd and unwarrantable ever to be said by any.

In the third of these books St. Augustine says, speaking of the doctrine of original sin in infants :

" If we could with convenience come to ask that most learned man (St. Jerome) how many writers of Christian Dissertations, and interpreters of Holy Scripture, in both languages, could he recount, who, from the time that Christ's Church has been founded, have held no otherwise, have received no other doctrine from their predecessors, nor left any other to their successors ? For my part (though my reading is much less than his)

I do not remember that I ever heard any other thing from any Christian who received the Old and New Testaments, neither from such as were of the Catholic Church, nor from such as belonged to any sect or schism."

This testimony of St. Augustine is very important: he declares that he never met with any Christian, either Churchman or Sectary, nor with any writer who acknowledged the Scripture, who taught any other doctrine but that infants are baptized *for pardon of sins*: much less then had he known or heard of any who denied that they were to be baptized at all. And they had then, as I said before, but three hundred years to look back to the times of the Apostles; and St. Augustine, though he speaks modestly of his own attainments, had studied the history of the Church so well, that in a few years after this time he published his *History of all the sects or opinions* that were or had been in Christendom.

To that objection of Pelagius, "If baptism take away original sin, then such children as are born of parents both baptized must be without that sin," St. Augustine answers to this effect, "If I had this cause to manage against such men as either denied that infants are to be baptized, or said that it was needless to baptize them, because they, being born of baptized parents, are necessarily partakers of their parents' privilege,

then I ought to take more pains with such persons in confuting their opinion than would be necessary with others. Such persons should be reminded that as a circumcised parent begets an uncircumcised son, and wheat that has been cleansed from chaff does, if it is sown, produce wheat with chaff upon it; so a parent, who has been spiritually cleansed, begets a son who resembles him not according to that state which he is in by spiritual regeneration, but according to the state in which he was by carnal generation."

After this, it would really be trifling with the argument, and with the patience of my reader, to dwell upon this subject longer: I will only make one observation more, and then close this chapter.

We see that the Pelagians denied original sin. The Catholic doctors, among other arguments against them, urged this: That infants have original sin is proved from the need they have of baptism, which is given them on account of sin, and other than original sin they cannot have. The Pelagians do not pretend to deny the necessity of Infant Baptism, which it would have been highly for their advantage to do if they could; and when St. Augustine mentions it as a practice of the whole Church from the time of the Apostles, they do not deny it; but distinctly admit it; as we shall see by what follows:

"We hold one baptism which we say ought to be administered with the same sacramental words to *infants* as to older persons."—*From the Creed of Pelagius.*

"Who can be so impious as to hinder infants from being baptized and born again in Christ ?

"Men slander me as if I denied the sacrament of baptism to infants, or did promise the kingdom of God to some persons, without the redemption of Christ, which is a thing that I never heard, no, not even any wicked heretic say."—*Letter of Pelagius to Pope Innocent.*

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## CHAPTER IV.

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### *Examination of Dr. Gale's "Reflections on Mr. Wall's History of Infant Baptism," and of Dr. Cox's Book "On Baptism."*

HAVING treated this subject with as much detail and minuteness as was necessary to give a clear view of this very interesting and important question, the reader will now be able to accompany me, without difficulty, in a review which I mean to take of two works which have obtained much reputation among the Baptists, as giving a powerful, and, as they think, a successful defence of their tenets; and it is for this reason that I have selected those volumes for a particular examination. The work of Dr. Gale is considered as the most elaborate production that has ever appeared on that side, and is certainly a shrewd and able performance. The work of Dr. Cox is the latest book which I have met with from the pen of a Baptist writer; and as that author has handled the question in what he is pleased to think a new

and improved manner, I cannot deal more fairly with the argument than by making his work the subject of my investigation. It is but fair to let the reader see in what manner the Baptists defend their own cause; and it is but just to the writers, too, to let them state their own arguments in their own words.

The former part of Dr. Gale's book is wholly occupied with etymological criticisms, illustrative of the meanings in which he understands the words  $\muαθητευω$  and  $\betaαπτιζω$ , which I have already observed signify *to proselyte* and *to baptize*: Concerning the signification of  $\muαθητευω$  I have already written at some length; of  $\betaαπτιζω$ , I shall speak at the close of this volume. My present object is to consider the animadversions of Dr. Gale upon Mr. Wall's general argument. In doing this, it shall be my endeavour to omit nothing which demands the attention of a fair and candid examiner.

The first passage which requires to be considered occurs in Dr. Gale's sixth letter, p. 221.\*

“ He (Mr. Wall) first very freely allows (and, indeed, what unprejudiced man would venture to assert the contrary?) that it cannot be made appear from the Scriptures that infants were to be

\* The edition which I have now before me is the first that was published, without Dr. Gale's name. London, 1711.

baptized, for in the commission, Matt. xxviii. 19, *There is no particular direction given what to do with reference to the children of those that received the faith.* Nor is there in any other place, *among all the persons that are recorded as baptized by the Apostles, express mention of any infants.* And the proofs drawn by consequence from some places of Scripture, are not so plain, as to hinder the arguments drawn from other places for the other side, from seeming still considerable.

This, I cannot help saying, was a most unwise and uncalled for concession on the part of Mr. Wall, as the reader must be well satisfied from what has been already said in the two first chapters of this volume. The nature of the task in which Mr. Wall had been engaged was, I apprehend, the cause of his depreciating the evidence of Scripture so far below its proper value: he had been industriously employed in collecting proofs of Infant Baptism from the writings of the early Fathers, and from the decrees of councils, and their testimony was so full and satisfactory to him, that he was ready to make the Baptists the largest concessions which he could, consistently with the maintenance of the truth; and for this purpose he even consented to regard the evidence of Scripture in favour of Infant Baptism as merely an equipoise to the evidence which the

Baptists exhibit against it ; well knowing that the proofs which he had to adduce, from other sources, would cause the balance to incline in his favour with an overwhelming preponderance ; and so indeed it does in the mind of every one who justly weighs the arguments on both sides. Dr. Gale, therefore, exults here without a victory ; for, when the weight which Mr. Wall has thrown from Ecclesiastical history into the scale is withdrawn, the balance is even, according to Mr. Wall ; and so far is the question from being decided in favour of his opponents, that it is not determined either one way or the other ; but he is left totally in the dark as to whether Infants are to be baptized or not.

In p. 226, Dr. Gale says, “unless he,” Mr. Wall, “can shew us, at least by good consequence, that Infant Baptism is so much as mentioned in the Scriptures, we shan’t believe it is instituted there, though we are told it ever so often.” “Mentioned by good consequence” is rather an absurd, or, at least, an ambiguous expression. If he mean by the above declaration to tell us that he will not be convinced by a just inference from the Scripture, I am afraid he must condemn himself for some things which even the Baptists grant, though they have no better reason for it than “a good consequence.” What other evidence than a good consequence could Dr. Gale produce for Female Communion ? Again he says, “if it [Infant

Baptism] had been an institution of Christ, it would have been mentioned in some passage of Holy Writ, as we see adult baptism frequently is." Now, to use the former illustration, he might as well say that, if female communion had been an institution of Christ, it would have been mentioned in Scripture as male communion frequently is.

Again, p. 227, "If Infant Baptism, then, is not to be found in Scripture, no Christian is obliged to practise it?" Here, by the assistance of an ambiguous expression, Dr. Gale endeavours to impose upon his readers : "not to be found in Scripture" is understood by Protestants to mean, either found *expressly*, or *by implication*. Express evidence for Infant Baptism we have none ; but the evidence from just inference is copious and decisive : whenever a proof of the latter species is produced, Dr. Gale constantly demands the former : if that be not forthcoming, he declares that our cause is lost !

In p. 228, Dr. Gale observes, "the Pædobaptists have not the least countenance from God for Infant Baptism at all, which has nevertheless, through the prevailing power of custom and interest, too generally, but it is to be hoped not past all probability of recovery, superseded the one primitive, true, apostolical baptism, of which only, it is confessed, the Scripture speaks, viz. that of adult persons upon profession of their faith ; which is a thing very rarely seen or heard of now in the

greatest part of the Christian world, their traditional Pædobaptism being substituted in its room." This passage begins with a bold assertion, or, in logical terms, with a *petitio principii*. It is too soon to tell us that we have not "the least countenance from God for Pædobaptism," before Dr. Gale has even condescended to examine the evidence by which we prove it. However, it seems that this Infant Baptism has prevailed so far, that adult baptism is hardly ever heard of. To be sure it has: it must be so in a Church which has been for some time established. Who ever heard of adult circumcision of a descendant of Abraham after the time of Joshua? Infant circumcision of natural-born Jews had then thrust adult circumcision of such out of the world: and so it is with respect to Infant Baptism now, and for the same reason.

" Such as are true friends to the Protestant cause, (continues the Doctor, p. 229,) ought always to have particular regard to that which is the chief corner stone in its foundation; which is, to have no other rule of faith, or judge of controversy, beside the sacred word of God." This is hardly deserving of notice after the exposure I have already made of Dr. Gale's palpable sophistry in the use of the expression "found in Scripture." Protestants, indeed, have no other rule of faith, or judge of controversy, beside the sacred word

God ; " So that," in the words of the Sixth Article, " whatsoever is not read therein, nor may be proved thereby, is not to be required of any man, that it should be believed as an article of faith, or to be thought requisite or necessary to salvation ;" and yet, whenever we attempt to prove our assertion by good consequence from Scripture, Dr. Gale charges us with a violation of one of the soundest principles of Protestantism. But since Infant Baptism rests upon this very principle, we may justly say that the Baptists, and not we, are apostates from this great principle of the Reformed Church, and are chargeable with the offence of attempting " to advance another rule besides the Scripture."

But Dr. Gale has, as he thinks, another charge against us, viz. that of " rejecting tradition, and appealing to the Bible, as the sole authority, when they," the Pædobaptists, " dispute against the Papists ; and in building, at the same time, the baptism of infants, only on the pretended tradition of the Church. p. 230. They have often, and with great advantage, argued from Infant Baptism ; which, they strongly assert, is only grounded on the tradition of the Church ; and therefore will always remain an unanswerable argument for tradition, against all such as admit of that practice. To this the reformed divines have yet never made any solid answer ; and those passages which

Mr. *Stennett*, in answer to *Russen*, has translated from the ingenious Monsieur *Bossuet*, will be a standing unanswerable objection to the Pædo-baptist Protestants, and cannot be solved, but by flinging up Infant Baptism, or else by shewing it to be founded on Scripture, which nevertheless, 'tis confessed, can't be done: and the anonymous Answer to the Bishop of *Meaux* ingenuously acknowledges, that *the passages produced do at most only prove, that it is permitted, or rather, that it is not forbidden to baptize infants.*" pp. 231, 2.

Here, besides the false accusation that we build our practice of Infant Baptism "only" on the tradition of the Church, Dr. Gale has again betaken himself to a sophism, which is couched in the word 'tradition;' and that sophism is so transparent, that no one of the slightest discernment can fail to detect it. The tradition against which we contend in our controversy with the Papists is *the tradition of their own Church*, which is as "baseless as the fabric of a vision;" whereas the tradition by which we defend Infant Baptism is that of the CHURCH UNIVERSAL, according to the Canon of Vincentius Lirenensis, *quod ubique, quod semper*; by this tradition, the Church of Rome is so far from being able to defend herself, or to assail others, that it is one of the brightest and keenest weapons by which that

corrupt Church has been cloven down by the reformers; and, what is more than all, by the evidence of this tradition, we Protestants are satisfied of the authenticity of the Holy Scriptures themselves.\*

But, if I do not misunderstand the following passage, Dr. Gale goes even farther than many of his communion will be disposed to accompany him: we have already seen that, in spite of himself, the doctor admits the validity of a just inference from Scripture in some cases, as, for example, in defence of female communion, which is no where expressly commanded or exemplified: and yet here follows a passage which seems to condemn this very principle, of being convinced by "good consequence." "The Scriptures being the records of revealed religion, nothing can be our duty but what they enjoin; and consequently we are to take no notice of what is not expressed in them."† If these words had stood by themselves, and had not been limited in their significa-

\* "We believe the book of Scripture to be canonical upon the credibility of *Universal Tradition*, which is a thing credible in itself, and therefore fit to be rested on." Chillingworth's *Religion of Protestants*, &c. chap. ii. sec. 25. And, "We have sufficient certainty of Scripture, not from the bare testimony of any present Church, but from **UNIVERSAL TRADITION.**" *Ib.* chap. iii. sec. 27.

† p. 234.

tion by the words that follow them, I should have been disposed to understand them in a sense which would, notwithstanding the very equivocal meaning of the term *expressed*, be consistent with Dr. Gale's avowed principles ; but he has heroically determined to forego any such advantage, by distinctly telling us that he used the words strictly and precisely : and, that the reader may not make any mistake, he illustrates his position in so plain a manner, as to make it impossible to misconceive him. Now let us suppose an argument to be employed in proof of the resurrection, solely from the book of the Old Testament in the following form : “ That the dead are raised, even Moses showed at the bush, when he calleth the Lord the God of Abraham, and the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob : for he is not the God of the dead, but of the living ; for all live unto him.”\* Where is the fact of the resurrection of the dead expressly asserted in this passage ? These words were uttered by the lips of Truth itself ; and are therefore true : but let it be remembered that the truth in this argument is not put forth upon the footing of authority, but of argumentation. Can any of Dr. Gale's followers shew me where it is said expressly here that the dead are raised ? Yet this answer silenced the

\* Luke, xx. 37, 38.

Sadducees, and satisfied the scribes and the multitude. Let us hear no more then of the invalidity of just reasoning from Scripture. Many of the most important truths of our Holy Religion are undeniably established by this very sort of evidence which Dr. Gale and his associates are so anxious to repudiate. "For our belief in the Trinity," says the learned and judicious Hooker, "the co-eternity of the Son of God with his Father, the proceeding of the Spirit from the Father and the Son, the duty of baptizing infants; these with such other principal points, the necessity whereof is by none denied, are, notwithstanding, in Scripture no where to be found by express literal mention; only deduced they are out of Scripture by collection."\*

But, says Dr. Gale, "'Tis a sure maxim of Tertullian, *Negat Scriptura quod non notat*, (what the Scripture does not mention, it denies.) A maxim so fatal to the cause which depends upon tradition, that Le Prieure could not safely pass it by, without boldly accusing this ancient writer of heterodoxy. To apply this to our present dispute: Since the Scripture in all the places, where it speaks of baptism, is confessed to speak only of adult baptism, and never once to mention infants; one would think it should be an unavoidable con-

\* Eccles. Polity. book i. sec. 14.

sequence, that therefore the adults only which are mentioned, and not infants which are not, should be looked upon as fit subjects of baptism. If adult baptism only be mentioned in Scripture, then Infant Baptism to be sure cannot be grounded upon that Sacred Law—and to draw a home inference, it must be unlawful to baptize infants under pretence of divine authority, and as by commission from Christ; since it appears to be contrary to, or at least different from, his intention, which was that adult persons should be baptized: and, as appears from the frequent mention of adults, and the total silence about infants, that this sacred ordinance should not be profaned by admitting such unfit subjects to it.”\*

Let us examine this passage. “The Scripture,” says Tertullian, “denies, what it mentions not.” Very well: but how are these words to be understood? The Scripture enumerates the kings of Israel; and, amongst those kings, David: the Scripture reckons up the sons of David; and amongst those sons, Solomon. Now, that amongst all the kings of Israel, there was but one named *David*; and that amongst all the sons of David, there was but one named *Solomon*, Tertullian’s argument undeniably proves; because, since the sacred volume proposed to enumerate all, if there

\* pp. 235, 6.

were more it would have named them. In this instance the Scripture, indeed, “denies what it mentions not.” But what should we think of a man who from this would infer that there never was such a person as William the Conqueror, because the Scripture no where mentions him? And yet this is precisely the way in which Dr. Gale abuses the argument of Tertullian! Tertullian’s remark has a probable foundation, if it be limited to the matter of which he is there speaking. “There was,” says he, “no second Lamech, like him who had two wives; ‘the Scripture denies what it mentions not:’ as, therefore, it mentions only one such person in that age of the world, we may, very probably, infer that there was no other.” The observation of Tertullian, we see, is to be limited to the particular case which he had in view; and even in that case it does not necessarily conclude. How absurd and trifling is it then to change a special remark into a general maxim, and to infer *universally* that whatever the Scripture does not expressly mention, it absolutely condemns!

But this is not all; Infant Baptism “appears to be contrary to, or at least different from, his (Christ’s) intention, which was that all adult persons should be baptized.” What a pity it is that one little word should not only be capable of spoiling this sentence, but also of detecting and exposing the fallacy that lurks in it! Let the reader insert

the word *only*, and he will at once mar the whole strength of the passage : thus “ his intention was that adult persons ONLY should be baptized.” This is what Dr. Gale *would* say ; but it would have too plainly exposed the boldness of the assumption, and therefore he has given us a sentence which signifies nothing, or is nothing to the purpose.

But it seems Tertullian was a great favourite with our author, and that Father is frequently thrust forward by him with an oracular sentence in his mouth, which is either lamentably misunderstood by Dr. Gale, or has no bearing upon the point in question. In page 240 we have him again produced as an unexceptionable witness against the practice of Infant Baptism ; but there is so much inconsistency in the language of Dr. Gale, so much confusion in his sentiments, and so much sophistry in his reasoning, that it is difficult to disentangle the passage, and to present it to the reader in perspicuous form.

He is attempting to expose the error of the Pædobaptists in adopting Infant Baptism, because the Scripture does not condemn the practice : which, by the way, is a palpable *ignoratio elenchi* : but, let that pass for the present. “ Tertullian,” says Dr. Gale, “ well exposes the weakness of this way of arguing. Some in his time pleaded the lawfulness of wearing a military crown, which the Romans gave their soldiers who had distinguished

themselves by some extraordinary action, and thought they might continue to wear it after their conversion to Christianity, and if any found fault ; they presently recurred to our author's (Mr. Wall's) subterfuge, that the Scripture no where forbids them to do so.\* “*It's an easy matter,*” says Tertullian, “*to demand where it is written we may not wear the crown. But then too, where is it written we may?* For those who require their adversaries to produce Scripture authority conclude by it that their own cause should be supported by the same. *If 'tis lawful to wear the crown because the Scripture no where forbids it ; it may, with equal force, be retorted, that 'tis therefore not lawful, because the Scripture does no where command it.* What then must be done in that case ? Must both be allowed, because neither is forbidden ? Or must both be rejected, because neither is commanded ? You'll say, perhaps, *What is not prohibited is therefore allowed : No, 'tis forbidden by not being expressly allowed.*

“ If Tertullian's reasoning here,” says Dr. Gale, “ should not hold as to things in their own nature indifferent, he must, however, be blind indeed that does not see how strongly it holds in all religious matters, which it may be pretended we ought or ought not to do.” That is, in plain

\* Lib. de Corona. cap. ii. p. 101.

English, if these words of Tertullian are impertinent and nothing to the purpose for which, in my opinion, he alleged them, they will answer *my* purpose admirably well! Was such folly as this ever heard of? Was Dr. Gale so ignorant of one of the plainest principles in morals as not to know that the rules which regulate our conduct with respect to things indifferent are totally distinct from those by which we are to be guided with respect to positive duties, or to things which are intrinsically good or evil? By what new code of ethics has this learned gentleman formed his notions respecting the various classes of human actions? “If ‘tis lawful to wear the crown because the Scripture no where forbids it, it may with equal force be retorted, that ‘tis therefore not lawful because the Scripture does no where command it.” These are the words of Tertullian; and the general principle which they involve is adopted by Dr. Gale. But I deny the consequence: If I confess that I ought not to do that which the Scripture forbids, I do not necessarily acknowledge myself bound to do nothing which the Scripture does not enjoin; because, where the Scripture is silent there may be other reasons, sufficiently powerful, to oblige me to do a certain action, or to forbear. And of this Tertullian himself was sensible; for, observing that concerning many actions the Scripture is totally silent,

he says that “in the Church a number of things are strictly to be observed, of which no law of Scripture makes mention, either one way or the other; that when things are observed and confirmed by long usage, that usage is a sufficient law: that in civil affairs, where there is no other law, custom itself stands for a law: that inasmuch as law is founded upon reason, to allege reason serves as well as to cite Scripture: that whatsoever is reasonable, is also lawful, whoever be the author of it: that the authority of custom is great: and, finally, that the custom of Christians was then, and had been a long time, not to wear garlands; and that, therefore, they were undoubtedly offenders who presumed to violate such a custom: the long observance of which was a sufficient law to bind all men to comply with it, unless they could shew some higher law—some law of Scripture to the contrary.” Now the passage which Dr. Gale has quoted from Tertullian against us will, when thus fairly explained, be found to serve our cause and to overthrow his own. For since, as I have undeniably shewn in the second chapter, the infants of all members of the Church from the time of Abraham to the time of our Lord had been regarded as being in the covenant, along with their parents; since this custom has never been questioned, never intermitted, never revoked; since the allusions to infants under

the Gospel, in the writings of the New Testament, and in the works of the Christian Fathers, all recognise and acknowledge this custom; some obliquely, some incidentally, some directly and explicitly—where, we ask, in reason and common sense, is the authority upon which the Baptists dare to withstand that CUSTOM, the observance of which the Scriptures so early enjoined, and have never afterwards countermanded or forbidden?

I dismiss this passage, with which Dr. Gale has accompanied his quotation from Tertullian, with one brief observation:—when our author is pleased to say—that all that can be made of our argument is that as we have nothing for our practice in the Scriptures, so there is nothing against us—he has overlooked or affected to be ignorant of the fact of the church-membership of infants under the Patriarchal and Mosaical dispensations, (that is to say, under these two forms of the one Church of God,) and the undeniable assertion, which all Pædobaptist writers have insisted upon, that the Divine Authority which granted this great and merciful privilege, has never cancelled or revoked it.

“But,” says Dr. Gale, “the Scripture does not leave this matter so undetermined as the Pædobaptists would fain persuade themselves, but directly disallows of Infant Baptism, and admits of no other but that of adult persons:”\* and his

argument is this—the commission which we read in Matthew, xxviii. 19, is the sole authority and rule, even for the holy Apostles themselves, in this matter, and by the very terms of that commission, the Apostles were to teach every person before they baptized him. This, indeed, is determining the matter with a witness. But in reply to this positive assertion, I answer, that we have no reason whatever to believe that this commission was the *sole* authority and rule to the Apostles in this matter; because it is indisputable that the Apostles had baptized many disciples of our Lord, before this command was given to them: and, indeed, the emphasis in the precept is to be laid upon the expression, *all nations*, and not upon the word *teach* or *baptize*. Hitherto the Apostles had baptized none but Jews, now they were to baptize Gentiles also, of *every nation*: and, secondly, even if this were the sole authority and rule in this case, surely it is too gross an imposition upon our judgments for Mr. Gale to tell us, as he does by implication, that we must understand the commission in the sense which he is pleased to put upon it! The words of our Lord are to be taken in that sense in which they must have been understood by the Apostles; and not according to the tenets of this or that party; and I have already shewn that Jews, as the Apostles were, with all the force of early and deeply-rooted habits and prejudices of their religion about them,

as we know they then were and long continued, would, beyond a doubt, interpret our Lord's command to include infants.

"But," say our author, "*μαθητευω* always signifies *to teach*.\* I affirm, notwithstanding, (and I refer the assertion to any one who has examined the writings of the early Fathers, and, particularly, the writing of the New Testament) that *μαθητευω* does not always signify to teach. But Dr. Gale attempts to prove his position by quoting several passages from various writers who use the word in that sense. Now, Dr. Gale ought to have known that from a *morally universal* proposition, a particular, or a singular, conclusion cannot legitimately be drawn; and, therefore, since he could not, without begging the question, maintain that *μαθητευω* means *to teach*, in every instance, without one exception, he must be fully aware that if he had brought forward ten thousand examples wherein the word had this signification, he could never infer that it must have the same meaning in this passage of St. Matthew's Gospel. The word has more than one sense; its meaning, in any particular case, is to be determined by the context, and by the circumstances in which it was employed: Dr. Gale, however, chooses to ascertain its meaning by a different canon, that is by

\* p. 262.

the sense which it sometimes has in *some other writings!* If we are always to settle the meaning of any given word in the New Testament by the meaning which that word has in the works of some of the Fathers, and of some of the pagan authors, we shall frequently fall into great and dangerous errors. The learned doctor's parade, therefore, of deep research and extensive reading is, in this case, wholly thrown away.

I pass over, without notice, several pages, in which I find nothing but a tedious repetition of the preceding fallacies: the principles, and mode of argumentation by which they may be detected and confuted are sufficiently developed in the former passages of this chapter.

At the end of the Seventh Letter,\* Dr. Gale sums up the argument upon which he had been insisting, by stating, that "*discipleship* necessarily included teaching," and adds, "it is enough for us that howsoever they (the Pædobaptists) may strain and torture the word, teaching is still necessarily included in it."

The reader will not be displeased to see the manner in which Dr. Lightfoot abates the force of this objection.

" There are two opinions of the Baptists which we are to be informed in, else we may fall into

\* p. 287.

mistake. *First*, That Baptism is not to be administered to any that are without knowledge. *Secondly*, That it is not to be administered to any unless he be a *verus filius fœderis*, a *true son of the covenant*. To these I answer, 1. God never ordained sacraments that their nature should be changed *pro captu recipientis*, according to the capacity of him that received them. Ordinances retain their nature whosoever receives them. As sin is sin, though not felt; and the word is the word of God, though he that hears it is not benefited by it; so sacraments are sacraments as to their nature whatsoever the receivers be. It is true their fruit is *pro captu recipientis*, but not their nature. The sacrament is a seal whosoever receives it. Again, you read of baptism without knowledge in Matt. xxviii. 19, 20. ‘Go ye, therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Ghost; teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you, and lo, I am with you alway even unto the end of the world.’

“ True indeed it is, the adults who were baptized confessed their sins, but this restrains not baptism to them alone, because there are several ends of it applicable to those who knew not, especially that in the next particular. As to the second objection, that baptism belongs to none but such as are in the covenant, and that it is a seal of our

righteousness—this phrase is fetched from Romans, iv. 11, which phrase is expounded to mean a seal of the person's righteousness who receives it.—But to examine this place—

“ 1. It is said to be *a sign*. Now a sign is to help unbelief and to confirm doctrine. Exod. iv. Moses's miracles, there mentioned, were to be signs to make the Israelites believe his message. 1 Cor. xiv. 22, Tongues are for a sign not to them that believe, but to them that believe not. And to that purpose is that of our Saviour, except ye see signs and wonders ye will not believe.

“ 2. The doctrines there delivered are well worth such a confirmation ; viz. 1. That a sinner, upon his believing in Christ, becomes righteous. This is the greatest truth. 2. That he becomes righteous by another. This was a wonder to the Jews : 3. That it is a better righteousness than Adam's—that it is by a righteousness infinite—viz. a righteousness that outvies condemning righteousness, and that very same righteousness that God gives to Christ.

“ So that the meaning of the words, ‘the sign of circumcision, a seal of the righteousness of faith,’ is that it was a seal to confirm that great doctrine. So sacraments are to seal the truth of God. He hath put to his seal in the sacrament as a seal to a deed confirms the truth of it. So that circumcision is a seal of the same truth to Esau,

Judas, &c. ; or else it loses its nature, which is to confirm God's truth. Baptism seals that truth that washing by the blood of Christ cleanseth us from our sins, so that though children knew not what baptism means, yet it hath this nature. "*They were all baptized.*" 1 Cor. x. 2. Who ? all our fathers, v. 1, all passed through the sea. Were there no children in arms ? Did they carry none on their backs when they passed through the sea ? What say the Baptists here ? This text says, *all* were baptized. They say, none ought to be baptized that are children, *because they are not capable of understanding the ordinance.* What then ? Were the Jewish children more capable than the children of Christians ? Why is it not lawful to imprint a seal of God's truth upon babes ? Memorials of God's truth and faithfulness have been imprinted upon lifeless and insensible things. Thus the *bow in the cloud* was set for a token of a covenant between God and the world, Gen. ix. 13, and Joshua wrote God's law on the stones of the altar, Josh. viii. 32 : it was imprinted on children by God's appointment in circumcision ; why not now ? Why do we seclude children from that honour now ? Why are they incapable now ?

" Mistake not in thinking that sacraments seal his righteousness or interest in God that receives them : No, they seal God's truth whosoever receives them. Simon Magus received baptism, and

Judas the Lord's supper. They were seals of God's truth, though not to their profit. Peter, Paul, received them for advantage. How? As seals? Yes, but not sealing their righteousness, but as seals of God's truth: and so they confirmed their faith. 'Tis ignorance and blind cavil to assert the sacraments seals of his righteousness that partakes of them, and therefore that infants are not to be baptized. Secondly, Infants are capable of *obligation*: a man may bind his heir, though an infant; so infants were bound by circumcision. Why not now? Nay, see Deut. xxix. 11—14, 'Your little ones, your wives, and thy stranger that is in thy camp, from the hewer of thy wood unto the drawer of thy water; That thou shouldest enter into the covenant with the Lord thy God, and into his oath, which the Lord thy God maketh with thee this day: That he may establish thee to-day for a people unto himself, and that he may be unto thee a God, as he hath said unto thee, and as he hath sworn unto thy fathers, to Abraham, to Isaac, and to Jacob. Neither with you only do I make this covenant and this oath:'—where you see that those who were unborn and distant when Moses made this covenant were bound to it, and children no further off than these.

"For the equity of the obligation lies not in the parties' understanding the thing, but *in*

*æquitate rei*, in the equity of the thing itself. How come all men liable to Adam's sin ? *Æquitas imputationis*, the equity of imputing it to them makes them liable as they are in Adam's loins and covenant. How do men become bound to perform their duty ? not because able, but *ex æquitate rei*, because it is so equal and fit that they should. So children at baptism may come under obligation, not because they are able to perform their duty to know it, but the equity of the thing lays it on. They have a natural bond upon themselves, as creatures, to homage God ; if the sacramental bond be added, they are bound as Christians to homage Christ. Why should this be so monstrous since they are as much capable to know the one as the other ? I may add, they are part of their parents, and, therefore, to be brought under the same bond. So I would answer a Baptist. I baptize my child because I am baptized myself. A strange reason will he say—Let him give me the reason of these two passages, Gen. xvii. 14, ‘And the uncircumcised man-child, whose flesh of his foreskin is not circumcised, that soul shall be cut off from his people ; he hath broken my covenant.’ And Exod. xx. 5, ‘Thou shalt not bow down thyself to them, nor serve them : for I the Lord thy God am a jealous God, visiting the iniquity of the fathers upon the children unto

the third and fourth generaton of them that hate me.'

" Alas ! what hath the poor child done ? Why doth God visit the iniquity of the father upon the child ? He is part of his parent, and in the punishment of the child, the parent is punished. Here then is the reason why parents ought to bring their children to baptism, because they are themselves not whole under this bond, and introduction, if part of them, viz. their children, be out of it. This is the reason of baptizing whole families, Acts, xvi. 15, 33, &c. where you may see how they are first discipled by baptism in a minute after hearing of Christ, and also how the whole family was baptized with the parent. It is childish to say it may be there were no children in these families, and shews their ignorance that plead it. For if ever so many children, they must be baptized ; for so was the custom of the Jewish nation in their use of baptism : when a proselyte came in, his children were baptized with him ; and all this upon this ground, that all that were related to the parent might come into covenant. But were succeeding generations of proselytes' children baptized ? I answer no ; but only the first generation was baptized. Why then, are we baptized after the conversion of our nation ? I answer they had the sacrament of admission for

true Israelites, and that continued from generation to generation. And baptism, being of the same nature and use, requires the same continued practice.

“ *Thirdly.* Baptism is for privilegial ends. A child is capable of privilege: a child in the cradle may be made a king. Children were capable of circumcision: that was a privilege to be admitted into the Jewish Church. Why are they not capable of the like privilege now? Tal. Bab. in Jeremiah, chap. iv. disputes this case, and so resolves that one may be privileged though he knew it not.

“ *Objection.* But these privileges come by birth of Christian parents?—Answer, no. Birthright entitles to that, and that admits to the rest of the privileges. He that was uncircumcised was cut off, though of circumcised parentage. Gen. xvii. 14. This argument the Apostle handles, 1 Cor. vii. 14. So that children were not only capable of baptism, as a privilege, but bound to baptism as an introduction to privilege, and cut off without it, as it was in circumcision.

“ The baptism of John belonged to infants, though it be the baptism of repentance, and they know not what repentance means. For it requires not their repentance at their receiving the sacrament, when they stand but at the door or entry of the Church; but it engages them to repentance

for the time to come ; or when they, being now entered into the Church, shall come to the use of reason or knowledge of the engagement. And so it was with the children that were circumcised : for they, when they underwent that sacrament, undertook obedience to the whole law, (Gal. v. 2.) and yet they knew not what either obedience or the law meant ; but that undertaking was what they were to do when they came to the years of knowledge and apprehension."

That God was mercifully pleased, in the Patriarchal and Mosaical dispensations, to take the children into covenant with the parents is plain from what I have said in the second chapter : it is there made equally manifest that this covenant was a *spiritual* one. Now I believe that this institute, in which wisdom and mercy are conspicuously blended, is peculiar to the true religion. Certainly, when considered in the full extent and meaning in which the benefit must be understood in its connexion with a religion that has God for its author, nothing like it can be pointed out in any of the forms in which Paganism appears upon the page of history. The case, then, of an infant being looked upon as a fellow disciple of his parents, and as heir to the same spiritual privileges, is a case *sui generis* ; we cannot be justified, therefore, in looking into the writings of the authors of Pagan antiquity for authorities by

which the sense affixed by our Baptist brethren to the word  $\mu\alpha\varepsilon\eta\tau\eta\varsigma$ , can be either established or overthrown ; such testimonies are wholly inadmissible in an argument of this sort : unquestionably a heathen never could apply to an infant the term *disciple*, in the same sense as a Christian or a Jew would. The Baptists may therefore spare themselves the labour of framing a long muster-roll of classic writers, who use the word in a sense which cannot be applied to infants. Their cause gains no advantage, our cause sustains no injury, from such management. Yet Dr. Gale has devoted a considerable portion of his eighth letter to this point ; and a careless or unwary reader might be led by him into a conclusion unwarranted by fair and admissible evidence : but I observe that this is a usual practice with writers who are unable to bear up against the invincible force of truth :—they generally contrive to lay before the reader a long series of unquestionable facts, which are not only demonstratively, but most obviously, true ; and when they have succeeded in throwing the mind off its guard by satiating and jading it with a number of self-evident propositions, they craftily embrace the opportunity of introducing the insidious falsehood ; so that the mind is suddenly surprised into the admission of the point at issue, before it is well aware of the design of the disputant. That this

imputation is fairly chargeable upon Dr. Gale, I am thoroughly convinced: that learned writer was too acute a reasoner to employ, without knowing it, a fallacious mode of argumentation, which no one, even of the very slenderest abilities, could fail immediately to detect. The occasion of this criticism of Dr. Gale was a remark which had been made by Mr. Wall upon Acts, xv. 10, “Now therefore why tempt ye God, to put a yoke upon the neck of the disciples, which neither our fathers nor we were able to bear?”—From these words the doctor maintains that no inference can be drawn respecting infants at all; the yoke, he says, was attempted to be put upon adults only: he does not indeed say, in express terms, adults *only*; but he knew very well that this was the sense in which his assertion would be understood by a wary reader, as it is, indeed, the only sense in which it would avail him to make it: but he hoped to conceal the obvious falsehood of his position under the needful veil of a studied laxity of expression; and I am sorry to observe that this disingenuous mode of escaping detection is by no means uncommon with Dr. Gale, and several of his brethren. Now I maintain that infants *were* included in this remark of the Apostle, for since whenever a parent was circumcised according to the suggestion of those false teachers whom the Apostle here rebukes, his infants also

were circumcised along with him : and I say with Mr. Wall, in contradiction to his opponent, that infants must have been *chiefly* intended, inasmuch as upon them the yoke would, when the custom was once introduced and had gained a footing in the Church, have been *almost exclusively* imposed. As for Dr. Gale's cavil respecting the nature of the yoke, *that* is so far from supporting his view of the case, that it affords us another strong reason for our own ; since the yoke was the obligation to observe the whole law, which as the Apostle says, (Gal. v.) the seal of circumcision lays upon the Jew : infants therefore, since they received the seal, were laid by it under an obligation to observe the whole law, and consequently had the yoke imposed upon them, and, finally must be numbered among those *disciples*, whose liberty the Apostle has here so earnestly vindicated. If the Baptists ask how an infant can come under an obligation, I send him to the Bible for an answer, since that records the fact as an ordinance of the Almighty, which the Baptists (unconsciously, I believe,) have taken upon themselves to arraign.

The next passage which I shall examine is in page 320, where Dr. Gale is speaking of Philip and the Ethiopian nobleman : and says, that " St. Philip, even after the Eunuch had discovered his willingness, and asked for baptism, requires a hearty faith, as a necessary condition even in

persons ever so willing : “ If thou believest with all thine heart, thou mayest *be baptized*; *and not else, though you desire it ever so much.*”

The words in italics are added by our author to modify or rather to qualify the assertion of St. Philip. But where had Dr. Gale his warrant for such a bold assumption of authority over the meaning of the word of God ? Where could he find in the whole New Testament a reason or an example to justify such a restriction of St. Philip’s meaning ? Simon Magus, though he did not believe with all his heart, nay, though he did not believe at all, but was in the gall of bitterness and the bond of iniquity, was baptized notwithstanding upon his desiring it ; and so were several other persons who are mentioned in the New Testament. How then shall we justify such a daring attempt to limit the ordinance of God, where he has not thought proper to give us any authority to do so ? Besides, the words in question can only be interpreted to signify an exhortation to sincerity, and not a declaration of the terms, upon which he would grant the rite to the noble proselyte ; for no human being is competent to judge of the real motives of another’s heart, and consequently cannot regulate his conduct with respect to this sacrament by a fact of which it is not possible for him to be cognizant.\*

\* See some consideration upon this point in page 19.

The ninth letter is chiefly occupied with animadversions upon Mr. Wall's inferences in favour of Infant Baptism from the practice of the Jews. Dr. Gale labours to overthrow these consequences by depreciating the value of the Jewish writings subsequently to the coming of Christ: and he grounds his argument upon the absurd and frivolous nature of the matters with which the Rabbinical writers abound. But this will not avail the cause of the Baptists; for, how absurd and romantic soever the Rabbins may be considered in reasoning or sentiment, they are surely competent witnesses to matters of fact.

Dr. Gale, in p. 330, remarks, "They who have read their writings against the Christians, must have observed they ridicule the sacrament of baptism as an unaccountable and fanciful ceremony. The anonymous author of the antientest *Nizzachon* frequently touches upon it with his usual gall, and would expose it as very absurd and foolish; which to me is a clear argument he did not apprehend that our baptism was borrowed from the Jews; nay, he argues against it in one place, where he says, *It is nowhere commanded to plunge persons or proselytes into the water. Why therefore does Jesus command to do so?*"

But this shews how strong is the force of prejudice in the minds of the Baptist writers: Dr. Gale, who could not but know, from the words

of the Pharisees to John the Baptist, “ Why baptizest thou then ?” &c. that the Jews expected the Messiah would adopt that rite, and that it was one of the characteristics of Christ, and of his forerunner, here produces an ignorant Jewish writer who asks, how Jesus came to baptize ! And did our author hope to serve his cause by such auxiliaries ? Surely a man so well versed in the productions of the Rabbins, as Dr. Gale was, must know that, in their enmity against the Christian Religion, the Jewish writers are accustomed not only to malign it by false accusations, but have been frequently detected in falsifying their own Scriptures, or, at least, in misinterpreting them, for the purpose of veiling the effulgence of that evidence which they bear to the Messiahship of our blessed Lord.

In the eleventh letter, our author discusses the evidence drawn from the writings of the ancient Fathers. In the beginning of this letter, pp. 395, 6, Dr. Gale boldly defends the reputation of these writers against the accusations of Daillé, and says, that such treatment “ is an ill return for the great lessons and examples of piety they have given us, and for their having been so instrumental in transmitting to us the knowledge of our most holy religion. And there is yet a greater evil attends this method ; for all the abuses and affronts put upon the Fathers of the first centuries,

do in the end reflect on Christianity itself, which those great men have handed down, and which therefore must needs be, in some degree, of but doubtful authority, if it depends on insufficient authority, if it depends on insufficient testimonies.

—That the Fathers of the first Churches were honest, faithful men, and every way capable to acquaint us with the true posture of affairs in their own Churches and times, and therefore are to be depended on as far as they relate facts within their proper cognizance, must be allowed on all hands."

Now let us hear the doctor, in the very next page (397 :)

" But without any reflection on the honour and fidelity of the Fathers, their testimony cannot support Infant Baptism, though they should afford our author ever so many and full citations : for if the Fathers only prove *fact* in the Church, and not *right*; and the Church was not wholly pure from innovations ; how does this prove the baptism of infants was no innovation, but an institution of Christ ? and yet this is the thing our author should have done, though he takes no notice of it.—It is irksome to remember the instances of human frailty which even the most ancient Church was liable to : they were men subject to like passions with us, and therefore no wonder they were sometimes in the wrong ; and their zeal for God's

honour was not always according to knowledge : which, though it might keep them from losing the chief thing our Lord had commanded, might however expose them to the inconveniency of superadding several things He never authorized."

How these contradictory assertions are to be reconciled either with each other, or with the truth, I leave the reader to determine: at all events, I suppose he will coincide with me in opinion that, after such an inconsistent estimate of the value of the testimony which he is discussing, Dr. Gale's observations are entitled to very little consideration.

The plan which I have adopted, however, and the expectation of the reader, rather than the necessity of the case, impel me to notice some of this writer's objections to our argument.

The doctor says, in page 398, (and here we come to another contradiction,) "in the present dispute between us and the Pædobaptists, though our author should prove with all imaginable evidence, that the churches did, immediately after the Apostles, practise Infant Baptism ; it will be no proof that Infant Baptism was instituted by Christ, or practised by his Apostles ; because it remains a very material question whether it was derived from them, or only began with some other things after their death ?"

And yet, in the very same page, the doctor

remarks “it is hardly to be imagined, that any considerable body of those ancient Christians, and much less that the whole or a great part of the Church, should so soon deviate from the customs and injunctions of their venerable founders, whose authority they held so sacred. And besides, new opinions or practices, we see, are usually introduced by degrees, and not at once, nor without opposition; therefore, in regard to baptism in particular, a thing of such universal concern and daily practice, I allow it to be very probable, that the primitive Churches kept to the Apostles’ pattern. But then I desire it may also be considered, that this, though ever so probable, cannot be fairly made equivalent to the authority of the Scriptures.”

Here is an astounding observation: Though the primitive Churches “kept to the Apostles’ pattern,” this can never fairly be made equivalent to the authority of Scripture: that is, in plain language, what the Apostles DID, is not of equal force with what they WROTE!

It is hardly necessary to notice a cavil which Dr. Gale employs against an inference of Mr. Wall from St. Clement’s observations on original sin. Mr. Wall had stated that from the doctrine of original sin the necessity of baptism for infants, in the opinion of the earlier Fathers, followed of course: and this opinion he has certainly

established by a very full induction of historical proof. But, says Dr. Gale, in page 403, “if none can be saved but such as are baptized into Christ, it might, with as much reason, be argued that all mankind, from the creation to Christ’s death, must also be for ever lost for want of baptism, which was not then instituted, as that children cannot be saved without baptism.” This, however, is as much as to say, that because, forsooth, baptism is not to be used before it is known, or even instituted, therefore it need not be observed where it is well known and commanded !

In the next page, our author is very angry with those who maintain the necessity of baptism in consequence of original sin, because we see infants “ who are sprinkled, are as much and as early inclined to vice ; and others, though ever so regularly baptized, are liable to the same inconveniences, entailed by Adam’s sin upon his posterity, as well as the rest of mankind, though not in the same degree : whereas, had baptism been designed entirely to wash away the effects and consequences of original sin, then all who are baptized should be perfectly free from those things as Adam was in innocence.”—As if one of the effects and consequences of original sin were not the *guilt* of it, and as if *that* might not be forgiven, without a deliverance from the *power* of it ! This confounding of the guilt with the

power of sin is certainly not calculated to exalt our estimation of the doctor's theological acumen.

But our author thinks that he has aimed a still more deadly blow by observing, "that if, because the primitive Church held the doctrine of original sin, they infer that infants were to be baptized, then it may as well follow that even all the Anti-pædobaptists in England who also firmly believe and profess the same notion of original sin, do likewise acknowledge and practise the baptism of infants also." p. 404. This does not follow, since, if the modern Baptists choose to act inconsistently with their principles, we cannot thence infer that others do wrong who act according to them.

Upon the words of our Lord to Nicodemus, (John, iii. 3,) Mr. Wall affixes this interpretation—that Baptism and the renewing of the Holy Ghost are necessary for all who shall enter into Heaven : by *all*, he means of course those to whom the doctrine of the Gospel is preached, and their children : for to the children, we hold that the promise belongs ; not because we discover this from the nature of the case, but because God is pleased to say so. Concerning the ultimate lot of those to whom the Gospel shall not have been preached, the Scripture is silent ; about them, therefore, we decide nothing.

With this sense of the passage Dr. Gale declares himself totally dissatisfied—first, because the words " Kingdom of God" denote, not Heaven, but the

Church : and secondly, because the word Τις signifies not *all*, or any one, but only *some*.

Now, First, that the “Kingdom of God” cannot mean the Church, is plain from this—that many, perhaps the greater number, of those who enter the Church, and continue in it, (viz. wicked men and hypocrites,) though they are baptized with water, are not born of the Spirit. The kingdom of God therefore, cannot here signify Heaven, into which no wicked man, continuing such, shall ever enter.

If it be said by our opponents that it can be proved on the other hand, that some enter into Heaven who have never been baptized—as was certainly the case with the penitent Thief;—I answer, that the declaration of our Lord implies that it is not the unavoidable but criminal and voluntary neglect of baptism that excludes from Heaven ; and though he may dispense with his own laws, we must not presume to do so. In short, it is the contempt of the sacraments, and not the privation of them, that is sinful and punishable.

And secondly, that the word Τις cannot mean *some* as Dr. Gale would have it, will be obvious at the first glance; for who will maintain the correctness of this translation :—

“ Unless *somebody* be born of water and of the Spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom, &c. ! ”

I say, therefore, that notwithstanding all the

noise and smoke of his attack, this learned assailant has left Mr. Wall's position wholly untouched.

The next passage of Scripture quoted by Dr. Gale, and the last to which I shall refer in this examination of his book, is in Col. ii. 11. “In whom also ye are circumcised with the circumcision made without hands, in putting off the body of the sins of the flesh by the circumcision of Christ.” This passage is alleged by the Pædobaptists in defence of their tenet; but Dr. Gale positively denies that it has any reference to, or connexion with, the question at issue: “The Scripture” (says he, p. 448) no where calls baptism circumcision, nor affords us any ground to imagine so.” This assertion is promptly and distinctly made, and he proceeds at once from the assertion of this position to the assumption of it, in the next page, making it the basis of an argument, as if it were a postulate, which no one would have the hardihood to dispute.

“Now if,” (says the doctor in the following page) “baptism is never called circumcision in Scripture; but something else, viz. purity of heart, &c. is frequently so called; how natural and necessary does it appear to understand the circumcision, Coloss. ii. 11, 19, to mean, not baptism, but purity of heart, &c.?”

“Not baptism, but purity of heart:”—now if baptism is tantamount to purity of heart—for the

sign is frequently put in Scripture for the thing signified—the objection of Dr. Gale falls at once to the ground. St. Peter says, *the like figure whereunto even baptism doth also now save us, (not the putting away of the filth of the flesh, but the answer of a good conscience towards God) by the resurrection of Jesus Christ.* 1 Peter, iii.

**21.** Besides, baptism and circumcision, being both seals of a spiritual covenant, are frequently indicated by their inward and spiritual parts, not only to the neglect, but in some cases to the denial of the outward and visible signs; as in the case of Peter, *not the putting away of the filth of the flesh;* not that water is no part, but that it is the less important part, of this rite. So David says, *Sacrifices and offerings thou wouldest not, but mine ears hast thou opened;* not that David intended to deny that God required sacrifices; but to indicate that obedience is so much more important than sacrifice, that the latter is despised in comparison with the former. Now, unless we are to adopt the principle of the Quakers, we must not understand the total exclusion of the outward sign, when nothing but the spiritual grace is mentioned. That which St. Peter, in the above passage, calls the answer of a good conscience towards God, is the same as that which St. Paul calls the *circumcision made without hands, the putting off the body of the sins of the flesh by the circumcision of Christ,* both allude to that

spiritual cleansing, which is the inward grace of baptism. But Dr. Gale says that baptism is never called circumcision in Scripture : What will the reader think of the doctor's caution or candour, when he reads the very next words of the Apostle, which are intimately connected with this verse, and explain it :—

“ BURIED WITH HIM IN BAPTISM, WHEREIN  
ALSO YE ARE RISEN WITH HIM THROUGH THE FAITH  
OF THE OPERATION OF GOD, WHO HATH RAISED HIM  
FROM THE DEAD !

I cannot take my leave of Dr. Gale without expressing my admiration of the extensive reading, great acuteness, and powers of argumentation, displayed in his book ; though I regret to observe that the last-mentioned faculty has been too often exercised for the purpose of perplexing the understanding of the reader, rather than of unclouding the truth or of exposing sophistry. Dr. Gale's chief skill is evinced in his cautiously abstaining from noticing the strong points in the arguments of the Pædobaptists, and in placing in the clearest light, and to the best advantage of his own cause, those facts and inferences, which are best calculated to do it service.—

I will now proceed to examine the arguments of Dr. Cox,\* This gentleman, in the commence-

\* On Baptism ; chiefly in reply to the Etymological Positions of the Rev. Greville Ewing, in his “ *Essay on*

ment of his work, evinces an amiable and a commendable anxiety to clear himself from the imputation of any unkindly feelings towards those whose arguments he is going to examine ; and earnestly deprecates any irritable disposition upon the part of all such as may examine his remarks : but this latter desire is wholly unnecessary ; for the only emotion which the perusal of this work can excite, in the mind of any Christian reader, is that of pure, unmixed sorrow, to see a subject of this sort handled by a person who is so obviously and lamentably incompetent to the task. To the fair and candid examination, however, of those observations, the doctor himself declares that he has no objection : the proprietor of what he knows to be fine gold, is under no apprehension when he sees it thrown into the furnace.

Dr. Cox commences his work with an observation, which, considering the subject to which it is designed to lead the reader, must convince any one who can distinguish between sophistry and

*Baptism ; The Polemic Discussions of the Rev. Timothy Dwight, S.T.D. LL.D. in his work entitled "Theology :" and the Inferential Reasonings of the Rev. Ralph Wardlaw, D.D. in his "Lectures on the Abrahamic Covenant."* By F. A. Cox, A.M. London, 1824.

The author of this book, now Dr. Cox, is, I understand, pastor of a highly respectable congregation of the Baptist persuasion at Hackney, and has recently been appointed to the office of Librarian to the London University.

argument that the author is totally in the dark as to the real nature of the question he is going to discuss. Let us hear him :

“ In order (p. 1,) to the clear comprehension of any subject, more especially when it involves a controverted topic, it is requisite, not only to consider it in its separate branches, but to ascertain its relative claims, and, if it belong to some general system, its comparative importance, and true position. Sometimes it may happen, that the only method of detecting the fallacy of an argument, which has been rendered plausible and imposing by the ingenious sophistries of an acute theorist, is to bring forward these primary and antecedent considerations, and by showing its inconsistency as part of some great whole, deduce the fact, and ultimately lead to the exposure of the point of error : in every instance it is essential to the truth of a subject, that it should be capable of being shown to be consistent both with itself, and with other ascertained and admitted facts or axioms, which constitute the basis of reasoning, and the data of general knowledge.”

Upon this passage, I observe, that this writer has contrived to place his subject in that point of view, which is most mischievously calculated to conceal its real character, and to lead both himself and his readers to a wrong conclusion. Any one indeed who knows that baptism is a positive institu-

tion might tell beforehand, to a certainty, that our author must, if he adhere to the line of argument which he has laid down for himself, arrive at an erroneous inference. So intimately, says he, is the rite of baptism connected in its nature and properties with the system of Christianity, that there is no possible way of obtaining a correct notion of the former, without a careful and extensive survey of the latter. “Baptism is a branch of the tree of Scriptural knowledge, or, if you please, a leaf.” I am not disposed to quarrel with this remark, if he mean by Scriptural knowledge that information which we derive from the Old and New Testaments; baptism being certainly one of those things of which we are informed in Scripture; though the writer has devised an odd way of telling us so. But, on reading the next passage, I find that this is not his meaning; but that he intends by it to say, that baptism is a part of Christianity, a rite of the Christian Church—very different things from *a leaf of Scriptural knowledge*. “To understand the nature, design, and character of baptism, we must, therefore, understand Christianity; and must not only shew that it belongs to the system, but is, in its great purposes and principles, in harmony with that system.” If by the word *Christianity*, the author here again inappropriately designates the Bible, or even the New Testament, I admit the truth of his assertion :

but, if he mean the doctrines and principles of our religion, I must tell him that it certainly is *not* necessary to understand those doctrines and principles in order to form a correct notion of baptism.

As to our shewing that “it belongs to the system,” I am again left to conjecture his meaning; which may be either that baptism belongs as a divinely appointed rite to the Christian religion, (and this I believe no one, whether Baptist or Pædo-baptist, ever denied,) or that we must prove that baptism appertains to the system of Christianity in its own nature and of necessity; or, to use his own illustration, as a leaf to a tree; and if this be his meaning, I defy Dr. Cox, or any of his brethren, to prove it: baptism being a positive institution for which no reason or authority can be assigned but the will and pleasure of God. And of this I am glad to have it in my power to produce a witness whom Dr. Cox will admit to be above all exception, and that shall be no other than the doctor himself, who, in p. 128, unmindful of the passage which I have just quoted, thus expresses his deliberate opinion: “Circumcision was a law or institute of the Mosaic economy, enacted for particular purposes explicitly stated at the time by the Divine Legislator; baptism is a law or institute of the Christian dispensation, enjoined in a similar manner, and by the same indisputable

authority. But neither the one nor the other originated in the fitness of things, or in any consideration of a moral nature; the propriety of each is traceable *solely* to the will of the institutor, and the obligation to practise either rite arises out of the revelation of that will. This is no new principle, but one universally admitted and constantly applied to all the institutions of worship . . . . To know what circumcision was, and by whom to be observed, we must repair to the recorded enactments; to know what baptism is, it was requisite to make a similar appeal."

From this it appears that, instead of going to our own wits for a correct notion of baptism, we must have recourse to the words of the institution in the New Testament, and to the information we find in the Old Testament, concerning that rite to which baptism succeeded.

A theorist who does not understand his own theory, or who is not fully convinced of its solidity, is sure to fall into such contradictions: I had not proceeded far in the writer's book before I began to suspect that the truth would come out before long. To talk of baptism belonging to the system and of harmonizing with the *great whole*, is to speak unintelligible gibberish; or else to employ expressions which are calculated to promote misconception: it would be much wiser and safer for poor, erring mortals, like us, to take care that

our notions of baptism agree with God's appointment, and not to be over-solicitous about their conformity with "the system;" with which they certainly will agree, if they be according to divine institution. And yet, Dr. Cox is so well pleased with his new mode of determining the question, that he cannot dissemble his delight at the thought of it :—"In my opinion," says he, "our opponents lose much, and we proportionably gain, by considering the *practice* in common with the *principle* of Christianity. This has seldom been attempted : it is nevertheless one of the most important branches of the inquiry, and must necessarily confirm any process of critical, historical, and argumentative discussion."\* And then the doctor proceeds, with the utmost complacency, to ask himself two questions : "What is Christianity? and what is Baptism as a part of Christianity?" And having decided that Christianity is a *Spiritual dispensation, a Spiritual kingdom, consisting of Spiritual subjects*, he proceeds, with confident assurance, to his conclusion,—That infants cannot be subjects of that kingdom, that is, that Christ's kingdom cannot possibly consist of those of whom our Lord has declared that it does consist !†

But the reader is perhaps impatient to know how our author infers that infants are not to be

\* p. 5.

† Mark, x. 14.

baptized. Why, plainly thus :—if none can become subjects of Christ's kingdom, or of the Christian Church, but those who can believe and profess for themselves, infants, who can do neither, must not be baptized ; and since baptism is only to be given to those who are members of the Church, it follows that it is absurd and unlawful to baptize infants, who cannot be Church members. If this be not begging the question, I don't know what is. To assume, as this writer does, that infants cannot be members of the Church, is to take for granted the very thing that he has undertaken and is bound to prove.

In pp. 6 and 7, Dr. Cox has plainly confounded the visible with the invisible Church, and all that he says goes to prove that none are entitled to baptism who are not members of the latter. This I take to be a fair exposition of his sentiments, which I would not intentionally misrepresent : indeed it would be impolitic as well as dishonest in me to do so, for the doctor's book is accessible to all my readers. Now to talk of administering baptism only to those who are members of the invisible Church, is just as absurd as to talk of believing invisible Scriptures, and of observing invisible sacraments. Our Saviour himself tells us that, "*the Kingdom of Heaven is like unto a net that was cast into the sea, and gathered of every kind ; which when it was full they drew to shore*"

*and sat down, and gathered the good into vessels, but cast the bad away.* And then he says, *so shall it be at the end of the world.\**

This, let the reader remember, is a description of the state of the Church of Christ, given us by our Lord himself. Is there any thing in this description that would lead us to take it for a kingdom which consists of one particular sort of persons *invisibly* united to Christ? On the contrary, is not the whole design of this similitude to teach us the very reverse; that his kingdom is to consist of a mixture of good and bad subjects until the end of the world? The bad as well as the good fish filled the net, and the Church is compared to the *net* in this respect: it is plain, therefore, that bad men as well as good are subjects of this kingdom; for I presume they are *members* of that kingdom which they fill up, as the fish must be in the net before they can fill it. All which circumstances plainly declare that the Church or kingdom of Christ shall consist of an admixture of good and bad people to the end of the world.

The same fact respecting his Church, our Lord, who well knew the nature and character of his own kingdom, has told us in two other parables, viz. in the parable of the tares in the field, and in the parable of the wedding feast. That there are good and

\* Matt. xiii. 47.

bad church-men is past all doubt, but that people are of the Church by means of invisible virtues, is as false as that only good men came to the feast in the Gospel. We are assured that *many are called, but few are chosen*; i. e. that many shall be made members of Christ's Church, but few shall be saved: and those who were called were as truly in and of the Church, as the bad fish were really in the net.\* How Dr. Cox and his brethren can reconcile their practice with respect to a demand of *satisfactory evidence* of the regeneration of a candidate, and a consequent deferring of the administration of that rite, I leave them to consider. The conduct of the Apostles was, indeed, consistent with the doctrine of their Divine Master: not so, the conduct of modern Baptists.†

\* For a clear view of the nature of Christ's Church, see Law's Reply to Dr. Hoadley's Answer to the Representation of the Committee of Convocation.

† "Entered," says the learned and judicious Hooker, "we are not into the visible Church, before our admittance by the door of baptism. Wherefore immediately upon the acknowledgment of Christian faith, the Eunuch, we see, was baptized by Philip, Paul by Ananias, by Peter a huge multitude containing three thousand souls; which being once baptized were reckoned in the number of souls added to the visible Church \* \* \* whose children are signed with this mark, *One Lord, one Faith, one Baptism*. For want of these it is, that Saracens, Jews, and Infidels, are excluded out of the bounds of the Church: others we may not deny to

I cannot help presenting to the reader the following passages, which the author has worked up with no ordinary care. Infant Baptism “may

be of the visible Church, as long as these things are not wanting in them. For apparent it is that all men are of necessity either Christians, or not Christians. If by external profession they be Christians, then are they of the visible Church of Christ; and Christians by external profession they are all whose mark of recognisance hath in it those things which we have mentioned, yea, although they be impious idolators, wicked heretics, persons excommunicable; yea, and cast out for notorious improbity. Such withal we deny not to be the imps and limbs of Satan, even as long as they continue such. Is it then possible that the self-same man should belong both to the synagogue of Satan, and to the Church of Jesus Christ? Unto that Church which is his mystical body, not possible ; because that body consisteth of none but only true *Israelites*, true sons of *Abraham*, true servants and saints of God. Howbeit of the visible body and Church of Jesus Christ those may be, and oftentimes are, in respect of the main parts of their outward profession, who, in regard of their inward disposition of mind, yea, of external conversation, yea, even of some parts of their very profession, are most worthily both hateful in the sight of God himself, and in the eyes of the sounder part of the visible Church most execrable. Our Saviour therefore compareth the kingdom of Heaven to a net, whereunto all which cometh neither is, nor seemeth, good fish : His Church he compareth unto a field, where tares, manifestly known and seen by all men, do grow intermingled with good corn, and even so shall continue till the final consummation of the world.” *Eccles. Polity.* book iii. sec. 1.

be a mere external badge—nay, rather, a momentary indication that the individual receiving it is—What? A disciple? No.—A worshipper? No.—An heir of glory? No.—One who is ‘buried with Christ,’ and who rises with him to ‘newness of life?’ No—but an indication that the individual is *related* to the Christian professor, and his relationship is supposed to constitute a right to the reception which, in the case of the infant recipient, confers no benefit, prevents no evil, and contains no moral obligation.”\*

So then the coming to Christ confers no benefit! The Apostles once were of this opinion, but our Lord rebuked them for it *with anger*. Let Dr. Cox tell us how children can come now to Christ but by baptism? But our author goes on and says, that whenever Infant Baptism is administered, it must be “with the assured conviction, in the mind of the whole party concerned in the anomalous transaction, that the baptized individual, not only cannot *then* profess Christianity, but may be its future OPPONENT and DESPISER.” Here it is taken for granted again that the personal profession of Christianity is necessary for every one who is to be baptized; and secondly, that baptism must not be administered to any one who *may be its future OPPONENT and DESPISER.*

\* pp. 11, 12.

The former assumption is another instance of begging the question, a species of paralogism for which our author has a remarkable predilection. The latter assumption lies I believe, as much against the Baptists themselves ; for I hope they will not say they baptize none that may afterwards prove the opponents and despisers of Christianity : and what is still worse, it lies against the Apostles, too ; for they baptized some who actually did become the opponents and despisers of Christianity ; for example, Simon Magus.

I pass over Dr. Cox's Examination of the Etymological Criticisms of Mr. Ewing on the meaning of the word *Baptize*, because I shall reserve what I have to say concerning that word to the conclusion of this volume.

I now come to Dr. Cox's examination of Dr. Dwight's Discourses on Baptism, and here I think it necessary to observe that I do not offer myself as the professed apologist of all Dr. Dwight's opinions ; some of which, especially those concerning the nature of the Christian Church, are manifestly untenable and absurd.

In answer to the objection of the Baptists that Infant Baptism is not enjoined by any express declaration in the Scriptures, Dr. Dwight justly and pertinently says, that the principle on which the objection is founded is—" nothing is our duty which is not thus commanded or declared in the

Scriptures, "and adds, "according to this, women are under no obligation to celebrate the Lord's supper—parents to pray for their children—mankind to observe the sabbath—rulers to defend the country, or to punish crime,"\*

To this, Dr. Cox replies—that Dr. Dwight "has confounded in his argument the obvious distinction between a positive duty, and a moral obligation." Now I affirm that Dr. Dwight has not confounded those two things; he has enumerated instances of *both*. He has not given one *for* the other, but he has given both the one *and* the other; he has touched the mark and gone *beyond* it, but he has not gone *beside* it, as Dr. Cox would imply, not, I believe, from a designed misrepresentation of his adversary, but from his own confused notion of the meaning of the terms which he has employed.

I take the very first example in Dr. Dwight's enumeration—the obligation of women to celebrate the Lord's supper,—and I ask Dr. Cox whether that be a positive duty or not? Let him answer the question fairly and honestly. Will he say that Dr. Dwight, in this instance, the very first which he has mentioned, has confounded the obvious distinction between a positive duty and a moral obligation? One instance of a positive

\* p. 110.

duty binding, though not expressly commanded, is as good for us against the Baptists as ten thousand.

But Dr. Cox goes on, and tells us that this principle would at once open upon us all the flood-gates of Popery. "Consider," says he, "for a moment,\* the flexibility of Dr. Dwight's argument, and how a Protestant would be annoyed by it were it in the hands of a Papist. The latter would require nothing more of his Protestant antagonist, than the admission of a principle which should confound this distinction. Once admit the inferential reasoning with regard to positive institutes, which is legitimate as applied to moral duties, and you open a door wide enough to admit all the mummeries of Popery."

I cannot help smiling at the unfounded apprehensions of Dr. Cox: the example given here by Dr. Dwight has led him into the mistake, and it is a good example to lead him out of it again. Let us examine it—We discover, by just inference from the declarations of Scripture, that women are to receive the Lord's supper: therefore, the sacrifice of the mass, worshipping of images, invocation of Saints, transubstantiation, and all the other "mummeries of Popery," are sound and Scriptural! Or thus: the just and

\* p. 111.

legitimate inferences from Scripture are safe and obligatory ; therefore the unsound and unwarrantable inferences of Popery are binding too ! Who would not laugh at such barefaced sophistry as this ?

Dr. Cox is fond of charging others with confounding things that ought to be carefully distinguished ; we here find the doctor himself chargeable with a glaring error of the same kind : for he manifestly confounds just inferences from Scripture with false and illogical ones. Is this writer so ignorant of the commonest rules and axioms of sound reasoning as not to know, that FROM TRUTH NO ONE, BY JUST CONSEQUENCE, CAN INFER FALSEHOOD ? And here I cannot help deplored the lamentable decay of dialectic learning, to which is mainly imputable the shallow and superficial character of the literature of the present age. “ The schoolmaster ” may be “ abroad,” but I can tell him he is very unfit for his office. If we would estimate the value of that noble art, and of those infallible and immutable rules of reasoning, which are so much neglected by modern writers, let us compare the clear conception, the nice discrimination, the lucid arrangement, the severe accuracy, for which the writers of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries were so much distinguished, with the flimsy, inconclusive, declamatory productions of the generality of those of the present

day;—men who have never been habituated to close study and patient investigation, whose highest aim and greatest policy is to conceal the poverty of meaning with the tinsel finery of verbiage, and the weakness of proof under the positiveness of assertion. I mean nothing invidious when I point to two examples which are immediately before me: Compare Dr. Gale's book with Dr. Cox's! from the latter, I venture to say, I could furnish a book of logic with numerous examples of every species of paralogism.

In Dr. Cox's reply to Dr. Dwight, (p. 113,) he exposes the absurdity of his own tenets, while he is endeavouring to overthrow the argument of his opponent.

Dr. Dwight, in answer to the objection of the Baptists that persons baptized in infancy prove that they were improper candidates for this ordinance by the future degeneracy of their conduct, very truly says, “this objection fails, because it proves too much. If we are to baptize none but those who are regenerate, it is necessary we should know whether the candidates are regenerated or not.” To this Dr. Cox answers, “It is necessary that we should have satisfactory *evidence* of the regeneration of the candidates for baptism prior to the performance of the rite; to *know* what is the state of the heart is the exclusive prerogative of Deity.” Why then do our

opponents defer the baptism of any person, since, on their own shewing, they cannot have decisive evidence of that regeneration which, in their opinion, alone entitles to baptism ? Is not this giving up the cause ? since it is plainly saying that after waiting ever so long, and examining the conduct of the candidate ever so rigidly, he may be a hypocrite, for any thing they know to the contrary ; in as much as to know the heart “is the exclusive prerogative of Deity !” And this Dr. Cox calls *satisfactory* evidence that the candidate is born of God—born of the Spirit, a believer, a disciple, a saint, a member of the body of Christ,\* a subject of that moral transformation which the rite of baptism was designed to symbolize !†

In the conduct of the blessed Apostles of our Lord I find no such gross and palpable absurdity. “ They that gladly received the word were baptized, and the same day were added unto them three thousand souls.”‡ “ And when they believed Philip they were baptized.”§ “ See here is water, what doth hinder me to be baptized ?” || “ And he received sight forthwith, and arose, and was baptized.”¶ “ Can any man forbid water that these should not be baptized ”\*\* “ And he took them the same hour of the night, and washed

\* p. 7.      † p. 115.

‡ Act, ii. 41.    § Chap. viii. 12.    || Chap. viii. 86.

¶ Chap. ix. 18.    \*\* Chap. x. 47.

their stripes, and was baptized, he and all his straightway."\* "And now, why *tarriest thou?* arise and be baptized."†

Where is there the slightest indication in any of these passages that the Apostles waited for that evidence which it was impossible for them to obtain? Where is the deferring of baptism till they could get *satisfactory evidence*? Where was the satisfactory evidence in the case of Simon Magus? "Oh! but," says Dr. Cox (p. 113) "with respect to those who have arrived at the period of personal responsibility, evidences may be obtained, according to our Saviour's decalaration, 'By their fruits ye shall know them.'" Without insisting here upon this bold perversion of our Lord's meaning, I shall content myself with referring to Dr. Cox's own words above, that to know what is the state of the heart, is the exclusive prerogative of Deity: (and I hope he will not deny that the heart is the subject and seat of regeneration :) what shall be said of the writer who, within four lines, flatly contradicts himself, and that, too, with a passage of Scripture grossly and palpably misinterpreted? I had rather the reader should answer this question than I.

"They (adults) are capacitated to repent, and to bring forth fruits meet for repentance." Here,

\* Chap. xvi. 33.

† Chap. xxii. 16.

by the way, is another specimen of that inaccuracy of discrimination which Dr. Cox blames so much in others ; he confounds a capacity with a habit, as if a capacity to repent were the same as repentance itself. “ But what can be said of unconscious infants, who are altogether incapable of supplying evidence of any kind that they are the proper subjects of baptism, if the sanctification of their incipient powers be a prerequisite to the administration of this ordinance ? ”\* I will tell Dr. Cox what can be said for unconscious infants by us, for it has been said by our Lord himself, “ **OF SUCH IS THE KINGDOM OF HEAVEN.** ” Are we to deny baptism to those of whom our Lord has expressly declared that they are members of his kingdom ? It is one of the dearest and most valued privileges of a Christian parent that there is an advocate in Heaven who constantly and availingly pleads along with their own hearts for the spiritual interests of their infant offspring, and whose words have mercifully assured us that the doctrines of grace are in strict alliance with the best feelings of nature—“ Suffer little children to come unto me, and forbid them not, for of such is the kingdom of Heaven.”

“ Dr. Dwight and many of our Pædobaptist friends continually *assume* that an infant is a

member of the visible Church or Church general : but where do they find the proof?" If Dr. Cox will take the trouble to read the very next leaf in his own book, (p. 120) he will find the proof, in the "forcible words" of Mr. M<sup>c</sup>Lean, who, speaking of Matt. ix. 11—15, says,—"Here are children brought to Christ, declared of his kingdom and blessed, and thus became **VISIBLE SUBJECTS!**" And, adds Mr. M<sup>c</sup>Lean, though our Lord did not command them (i. e. the disciples,) to baptize them, yet "he declares them of his kingdom and blesses them. Hence we learn that *infants may be acknowledged to be of the kingdom of God without baptizing them.*" Now if I were disposed to demand proof of bold assertion, I might here ask Dr. Cox where he or Mr. M<sup>c</sup>Lean finds the proof of that which they here *assume*, namely, that these infants were not baptized already? I do not assume that they were, because I have no proof: but Mr. M<sup>c</sup>Lean says they were not, and for his assertion he has as little ground.

With the utmost self-gratulation, Dr. Cox proceeds thus: "We assume nothing in our argument without positive demonstration, and demonstration which even our opponents admit to be conclusive in its nature." We beg to be excused from subscribing to the truth of this,

until we receive from Dr. Cox satisfactory answers to the following questions.

1. They (the Baptists) assume that they ought to wait for evidence of regeneration in a candidate before they baptize him. Where is there positive demonstration for that?

2. They assume that faith is necessary, *in every case*, before baptism. Where is their positive demonstration for that?

3. They assume that whenever house or household is mentioned in Scripture, the word is to be restrained to the servants or domestics, or to adult offspring. Where is their positive demonstration for that?

4. They assume that baptism is only for admission into the invisible Church, since they demand such qualifications for that rite as belong to those only who are members of that Church. Where is their positive demonstration for that?

5. They assume that they are bound to defer the baptism of their infants until they arrive at years of understanding and discretion. And where is their positive demonstration for that?

To these questions, the number of which it would be very easy to enlarge, I venture to add one, addressed especially to the doctor himself. He *assumes*, contrary to the opinion of all other writers, and contrary to his own recorded opinion

in another place, that baptism is a part of the Christian Religion, so naturally and necessarily connected with it, that to understand the former we must thoroughly understand the latter. And where is his positive demonstration for that ?

In page 139, Dr. Cox asks “ Were they (the descendants of Abraham) partakers of the Spiritual blessings ? Were they universally believers ? Were they chosen to eternal life because they were circumcised ? ”

I also beg to ask a question or two :—

Were the early baptized converts universally believers ? Did all who were baptized by the Apostles partake of redemption ? Were they chosen to eternal life because they were baptized ? When Dr. Cox gives us, with one hand, answers to our questions, he shall receive, in the other, answers to his own.

The reader cannot be more weary than I am in tracing our author through his fallacies and contradictions, which, however, I have sparingly noticed ; for they abound in every page of his book. I take the following passage from the last division of his work, which is devoted to some remarks on Dr. Wardlaw’s Lectures on the Abrahamic Covenant. I have not seen these Lectures ; but, from the passages cited by Dr. Cox, I should think they are deserving of attention.

"Circumcision," says Dr. Cox,\* "was a sign of the establishment of a covenant with Abraham and his posterity, denoting that it was the divine purpose to increase his family to a remarkable degree, so that they should become a great nation, and even be diffused afar over the surface of the earth—to manifest a peculiar and unalterable regard to his family as their God, by the ample fulfilment of the agreement which he now condescended to form with their illustrious ancestor, and which stipulated their extraordinary multiplication—and to give them Canaan for an inheritance. All persons, however attached to the family, whether as children or servants, were to undergo the prescribed rite, in order to distinguish them from the surrounding nations, and to evince that they belonged to the people whom God had especially chosen. This token of association with Abraham, and participation of his privileges, was, it appears, bestowed irrespectively of personal character, conduct, or faith: for the purchased slave received it as well as the home-born child, whether a believer in the God of Abraham or not, and simply as a part of his domestic establishment. But though they were to undergo the painful rite, the promise of inheritance was restricted to the posterity of the individual who stood as their federal repre-

\* p. 131.

sentative, and who, by this ordinance, were separated and distinguished from all the Gentile nations."

Dr. Cox must not expect to precipitate us into a conclusion unwarranted by facts or arguments. In this passage, we have several assertions, which are not only inconsistent with the Scriptures, but also with themselves. In the first place, circumcision is declared to be for a seal of temporal promises ; I take Dr. Cox's meaning to be that it was *only* for temporal promises, because that is the only sense in which the assertion is pertinent as here employed by him ; and indeed he has expressly told us so in p. 137, where he says, the covenant of circumcision included *solely temporal blessings*. This assertion, however, is unfounded ; for St. Paul says, that circumcision was a seal of the righteousness which is by faith : he also says, (Gal. v.) that it was a seal of the obligation to keep the whole law. Dr. Cox says, secondly, that circumcision was a seal of the promise exclusively for the posterity of Abraham ; and yet slaves and heathen proselytes were to be circumcised also, to shew that they, too, "belonged to the people whom God had especially chosen." Here is another contradiction. Dr. Cox says, thirdly, that this seal was to distinguish Abraham's posterity from the heathen, and yet these heathen might receive the seal too. This is another con-

tradiction. Dr. Cox also says, that the seal of circumcision was to assure to the seed of Abraham the land of Canaan; and yet Ishmael and Esau, descendants of that Patriarch, were both circumcised, but had no right to the land of Canaan notwithstanding. This is another contradiction. But it is needless for me further to demonstrate the invalidity of our author's theory.

In p. 137, Dr. Cox says, "Circumcision was, I allow, a seal to Abraham of the righteousness of faith. Undoubtedly Isaac and Jacob were co-heirs with Abraham, and circumcision indicated to them their heirship by birth of the temporal promises, and their equal participation by faith of the Spiritual blessings!"

After this, we may safely say that Dr. Cox did not understand the nature of the subject.

In my review of the arguments of Dr. Gale, I designedly passed by his remarks on 1 Cor. vii. 14. because I wished to reserve what I had to say upon them until I had come to that part of Dr. Cox's book in which he treats of the same text; the question has been so much and so often discussed, that I thought it better to present to the reader in one view all that has been urged concerning it by both these writers. Dr. Gale's remarks are acute and ingenious, and he has certainly made the best defence I have seen against the arguments drawn by the Pædobaptists from

this passage. These are the words of St. Paul, “ For the unbelieving husband is sanctified by the wife, and the unbelieving wife is sanctified by the husband : else were your children unclean ; but now are they holy.”

Dr. Gale maintains that by *holiness* is here only meant *legitimacy*, and that there is a manifest allusion to the practice which obtained among the Jews of regarding as unlawful the marriage of a Jew and a Gentile, and, consequently, of viewing the issue of such marriage as *illegitimate*. In short he thinks that the Corinthian converts had taken it into their heads that, because proselytism among the Jews dissolved all natural ties and relations, they were at liberty to put away their wives or husbands, if, in the case of one party embracing Christianity, the other continued in unbelief: if, for example, a Corinthian husband was converted, his wife still remaining a Heathen, he thought, in Dr. Gale’s opinion, that he might put her away. And the Dr. professses that he thinks it past a doubt that this is the error which the Apostle has applied himself to correct in the 14th verse of the Chapter.— “ What can be more proper and natural” says he, (page 516) “ than to suppose that St. Paul is endeavouring to put better thoughts into the converts and persuade them that their proselytism did not dissolve natural bonds and consanguinity ; and that it was not only lawful but advisable, and a duty for the

wife to dwell with her husband, for he is still her legitimate true husband, otherwise indeed, says he, your children would be unclean ; but the husband being illegitimate, the children are so too." Wonderful discovery ! what a sage resolution of a doubtful case ! and that too from the pen of an Apostle. If the marriage were unlawful, the children would be illegitimate ! surely, surely the Corinthians need not have sent to St. Paul to learn that. Had Dr. Gale never heard of proving a thing by itself, *idem per idem* ? The case here given by the learned Dr. is one of the most illustrious examples of that kind of argument that ever was written. " The husband being legitimate, the children are so too"! With respect to marriages amongst the Jews, Moses tolerated divorce *for the hardness of their hearts* ; but our Lord disallowed the practice ; he had expressly declared that nothing short of fornication could dissolve the marriage tie. Did not St. Paul know this ? Certainly he did : even Dr. Gale in the very next page shews that he was aware of it, for he says,— " As for marriages already contracted in unbelief, though one party afterwards became a believer, the Christian law did not oblige to put away the other who did not believe." Did not *oblige* ! why it did not *suffer* it—it expressly forbade it—" except for fornication," (*exceptio probat regulam.*) Can any thing be more express than our

Lord's interdiction in this case ? can any thing be plainer ? If then the only object which the Apostle had in view was that which Dr. Gale mentions, how comes it to pass that St. Paul overlooks our Lord's express command ? nay, not only overlooks it, but actually denies that he had any command of our Lord at all concerning the subject ! His words are, (ver. 12,) "But to the rest speak **I**, NOT THE LORD." Now, I say, had the ground of the scruple which moved the Corinthians to ask St. Paul's advice been, as the Baptist pretends, an apprehension that the cohabitation of a believer with an unbeliever in the married state was equivalent to fornication or uncleanness, St. Paul, who knew that their difference in religion made no such alteration in the case, would never have prefaced his determination with *thus speak I, not the Lord*, for he well knew that upon such a case the Lord HAD spoken most explicitly, and he would accordingly have said, as he does in ver. 10, *not I, but the Lord*. Is it credible, is it morally possible, that he who was immediately influenced by the Holy Ghost in the execution of his apostolic office, should only give his conjectural judgment, or merely prudential determination, in a question in which both he and they were previously determined by an express law and institute of God, and in which he knew himself to be so determined ? " To the married command **I**, and

yet not I, but the Lord ; Let not the wife depart from her husband."

To arrive at a clear and correct conception of the Apostle's meaning, we must carefully examine the whole of the passage in the chapter, in order to ascertain, as nearly as possible, the nature of that question to which St. Paul's words are an answer. Dr. Gale thinks that the Corinthians asked him whether the infidelity of a Christian husband or wife annulled the marriage. I have assigned a reason why I believe that this was not the question ; I am decidedly of the same opinion with those who think that the ground of the scruple about which the Corinthians consulted St. Paul was, not any fear that the marriage contract was invalid or unlawful, but a tenderness on account of the infidelity or idolatry of the heathen partner, lest by so near relationship they should seem either to expose themselves to danger, or to partake of the pollution of idolatry and unbelief ; and my opinion is confirmed upon considering the ground upon which the Apostle answers this apprehension, which is that of advantage or expediency. If a question is put respecting the lawfulness or unlawfulness of an action, it is decided by reference to a law ; if a question is moved concerning a custom, it is decided by a reference to custom or usage ; and if a question is asked respecting a point of expediency or advantage,

the answer is determined accordingly by the rules of prudence and discretion. Observe the Apostle's answer, *The unbelieving husband is sanctified* [i.e. hath been sanctified, is usually sanctified and brought over to the Christian faith by the conduct of, or] *by the wife,\* and the unbelieving wife is sanctified by the husband*: “That is,” says Hammond, “ ’tis of common experience, and from thence presumed very probable, that a Christian living with an unbeliever will instil Christianity into him or her, and therefore they should live together: this he further proves by the practice of the church about children, that *else were your children unclean, but now are they holy*, i.e. were it not for the great probability that the Christian living with the Heathen should infuse Christianity into him there could no reason be rendered of the practice of the church why the Christian child, which is no more Christian than the child of a Heathen (Christianity being no natural gift born with them) should yet be capable of baptism and thought fit to receive that sacrament, when the Heathen's child is not wont to be so admitted.” And to this customary efficacy of the Christian temper and behaviour in so influencing the heart and affections of the Heathen mate, as to bring him or her over to the Christian faith

\* Whitby has it, *Uxor is gratia.* ‘Because of the wife.’

the Apostle seems plainly to allude in the 16th verse, *For what knowest thou O wife, whether thou shalt save thy husband? or how knowest thou O man, whether thou shalt save thy wife?*

The most approved commentators agree in stating that *unclean* and *holy* never mean *illegitimate*, and *legitimate*, when applied to persons, but *Heathen* and *Christian*. So Beza, Grotius, Hammond, Le Clerc, &c.\* I here give the reader the paraphrase of Mr. Locke, upon the whole of this disputed passage: the opinion which he has ex-

\* Le Clerc says that the word *unclean*, *ακαθαρτα*, is here used in the same sense as it was by St. Peter, (Acts x. 14.) when he refused to preach the Gospel to the Gentiles, because he looked upon them as *common and unclean*, i. e. profane and impure. But God forbad him to call any one profane whom he had sanctified, i.e. judged fit to receive the tidings of the Gospel, just as those are here called *holy* who may be baptized. He also says, that *hadasch*, the Hebrew word corresponding to *to sanctify*, signifies also with the Rabbins, *to wash*, or *baptize*, and that the word *αγιαζεσθαι*, *sanctificari*, is used by Gregory Nazianzen, and other Fathers, to signify *to be baptized*.

Doddridge says, “ On the maturest and most impartial consideration of this text, I must judge it to refer to *Infant Baptism*. Nothing can be more apparent than that the word *holy*, signifies persons who might be admitted to partake of the distinguishing rites of God’s people. Compare Exod. xix. 6.; Deut. vii. 6.; xiv. 2.; xxvi. 19.; xxxiii. 3.; Ezra ix. 2. with Isaiah xxxv. 8.; lii. 1.; Acts x. 28.

pressed in the note appended to his paraphrase contains a brief statement of all that is necessary to be known respecting the real sense of the words *unclean* and *holy* when applied to persons. “ ’Tis my advice, not a commandment from the Lord, that if a Christian man have a Heathen wife that is content to live with him, let him not break company with her, and dissolve the marriage: and if a Christian woman hath an Heathen husband that is content to live with her, let her not break company with him, and dissolve the marriage. You need have no scruple concerning this matter, for the Heathen husband or wife, in respect of conjugal duty, can be no more refused than if they were Christians: For in this case the unbelieving husband is sanctified or made a Christian, as to his issue, in his wife, and the wife sanctified in her husband. If it were not so, the children of such parents would be unclean,\* i.e. in the state of Heathens, but now are they holy, i.e. born members of the Christian Church.”

—*Mr. Locke’s Paraphrase, in loc.*

\* ‘*Ὑγίαςαι sanctified, ἀγία holy, and ἀκαθαρτα unclean,* are used here by the Apostle in the *Jewish* sense. The Jews called all that were Jews *holy*; and all others they called *unclean*. Thus, *proles genita extra sanctitatem*, was a child begot by parents whilst they were yet Heathens; *genita intra sanctitatem*, was a child begot by parents after they were proselytes. This way of speaking St. Paul transfers from the Jewish into the Christian Church, calling all that are of the Christian Church *saints*, or *holy*; by which reason all that were out of it were unclean.

Dr. Gale and his brethren seem to me to have fallen into a material error in their view of the Apostle's argument: they regard the *holiness* of the children (whatever that holiness means) as being inferred by St. Paul, from the *sanctification* of the parents; whereas I think that the Apostle, on the contrary, infers the sanctification of the parents from the holiness of the children. I am not now speaking of, or contemplating the respective meanings of the words *sanctified* and *holy*, I am only collecting a conclusion, which is obviously inferable from, or rather plainly suggested by the very terms which the Apostle employs. I think it is plain from the very words of the text that the Apostle speaks of the holiness of the children as being evident and indisputable, as a fact, at that time, of public notoriety; not as the conclusion, but as one of the premises, of his argument. The propriety of the cohabitation of a Christian and an infidel was disputed; while it was a known and indisputable doctrine that their children were not unclean, but holy. This the Apostle asserts. There must then, as I have said before, have been some known privilege according to the practice of the Church, belonging to such children. Had this not been so, St. Paul's argument instead of proving what he intended by it, might rather have brought the opinion of their holiness into question. But that, it seems, was so

well known, and so unquestionable, that he assumes it as the very basis of his argument.

Let us now see what is Dr. Cox's opinion concerning this passage. Quoting the interpretation of Dr. Dwight, that—The unbelieving parent is so purified by means of his relation to the believing parent, that their mutual offspring are not unclean, but may be offered to God or come unto his temple,—Dr. Cox says, “The Doctor (Dwight) has evidently here lost sight of the distinction between the legal and evangelical senses of the term *holy*. The unbelieving parent is *purified* by the *believing* one! Is this a doctrine to be found in Scripture?” —This observation is expressed and circumstanced in such a way as to indicate the total absence of the most remote design to misinterpret the meaning of Dr. Dwight, or to mislead the reader; insomuch that the bitterest opponent of Dr. Cox can only charge him with the most amiable stupidity. Dr. Dwight has carefully told his reader that he takes the word *purified*, in a strictly limited, nay in an absolutely novel sense, and Dr. Cox in the simplicity of his heart understands it in a general sense! The former says, “the believing parent is SO purified, by means of his relation to the unbelieving parent THAT *their mutual offspring are not unclean* :” upon which Dr. Cox in the most artless and inoffensive manner exclaims, “ The unbelieving parent is purified by the *believing* one!

Is this a doctrine to be found in Scripture?" And then he goes on, as if nothing had been said upon the subject, to ask how is an unbeliever *purified* by a believer?

I trust that Dr. Cox will take this as a warning never again to meddle with controversy, since, notwithstanding the best intentions, he may wound his opponent by accident, and injure himself in the opinion of some people, who will not be convinced that there is no intentional misrepresentation, in spite of the most plain and evident indications to the contrary.

It is needless to say more upon the absurdity of the interpretation which the Baptists have attempted to give to this text; or on the soundness of that which I have shewn to be not only the opinion of some of the greatest divines of the Church, but also perfectly consistent with the Apostle's general argument.

Dr. Gale tells us of the great names which patronise his mode of interpretation; and I respect and venerate those names as much as any Baptist writer can: but upon this point my determination is fixed by no authority but that of truth and sound argument.—*Amicus Socrates, amicus Plato, sed magis amica Veritas.*

I have only one more observation to make concerning Dr. Cox's book, and that is respecting his remarks on Tertullian. At the close of the volume he has these words:

"The very first writer who speaks of Infant Baptism in the third century, Tertullian, in fact CONDEMNS it!"

Here I am reminded of a specimen of disingenuousness on the part of Dr. Cox, which is deserving of the strongest reprobation. In page 84, he tells us that Mr. Ewing refers his reader to Mosheim and Lardner for the character of Tertullian, "leaving it to be supposed that these authors would convince him that he (Tertullian) was more of a child than a father in literature and theology. This implication is wholly unfounded; and his references are, for himself, ill chosen. Let us turn to the first. 'Hitherto we have made no mention of the Latin writers, who employed their pens in the Christian cause. And, indeed, the only one of any note we find in this century is **TERTULLIAN**, by birth a Carthaginian.—He was a man of *extensive learning, of a fine genius*, and highly admired for his elocution in the Latin tongue. We have several works of his yet remaining, which were designed to *explain and defend the truth*, and to nourish pious reflections in the hearts of Christians.'" Thus far has Dr. Cox quoted from Mosheim; the words in italics are so printed in the doctor's book. Will the reader believe that Dr. Cox stops in the middle of a paragraph, precisely at the point where Mosheim thus goes on!—"There was, indeed, such a mixture in the

qualities of this man, that it is difficult to give his real character, and to determine which of the two were predominant, his *virtues* or his *defects*. He was endowed with a great genius, but seemed deficient in point of judgment. His piety was warm and vigorous, but, at the same time, melancholy and austere. His learning was extensive and profound; and yet his credulity and superstition were such as might have been expected from the darkest ignorance. And with respect to his reasonings, they had more of that subtlety that dazzles the imagination, than of that solidity that brings light and conviction to the mind.”\*

Dr. Cox was bound in candour and fairness to Mr. Ewing, not to conceal the preceding passage, in which Moshiem speaks of the *credulity*, *superstition*, and *subtlety* of argumentation, which mark the character of Tertullian. Not satisfied, however, with giving one example of literary unfairness, Dr. Cox goes on in the very next line to give another equally flagrant and unwarrantable :

\* “ It is proper to point out to such as are desirous of a more particular account of the works, as also of the excellencies and defects of these ancient writers, the authors who have professedly written concerning them, and the principal are those who follow : JO. ALB. FABRICIUS, in *Biblioth. Græc et Latin*; CAVE, *Hist. Litter. Scriptor. Eccl.*; DU PIN et CELLIER, *Biblioth des Auteurs Ecclesiastiques.*” — pp. 182, 183.

“ The most eminent and learned of all the followers of this rigid enthusiast (Montanus) was TERTULLIAN, a man of great learning and genius, but of an austere and melancholy natural temper.” So much Dr. Cox gives, because *more* would not suit his purpose: for Moshiem thus goes on, “ This great man, by adopting the sentiments of MONTANUS, and maintaining his cause with fortitude, and even vehemence in a multitude of books written upon that occasion, has shewn to the world a mortifying spectacle of the deviations of which human nature is capable, even in those in whom it seems to have approached the nearest to perfection.”\*

The sentiments which spontaneously arise in the mind of every fair and candid reader at such examples of literary artifice and disingenuity, are the only feelings which I desire to excite in the breasts of those who shall read this volume.

I should act disrespectfully towards the reader, and unjustly towards the subject before me, if I

\* “ For an account of the Montanists, see EUSEB. *Eccl. History*, book v. chap. xvi. and in general all the writers ancient and modern (especially TERTULLIAN) who have professedly written concerning the sects of the early ages. The learned Mr. THEOPHILUS WERNSDORF, published at Dantzick, in the year 1751, a most ingenious exposition of whatever regards the sect of the Montanists, under the following title: *Commentatio de Montanistis Sæculi secundi, vulgo creditis Hæreticis.*”—pp. 239, 240.

were not to give one or two passages from writers of high reputation in confirmation of the character which I have given of Tertullian from Mosheim.

Dupin, whose diligence and accuracy have never been questioned, says, that Tertullian's error respecting Infant Baptism is peculiar to himself, and that we find no other of the ancient writers who has spoken in the same way. After having noticed several gross errors of Tertullian, especially that of Montanism, this learned author gives the following exposition of the opinions of this Father respecting Infant Baptism : “ What necessity is there to expose godfathers to the hazard of answering for those whom they hold at the fonts ; since they may be prevented by death from being able to perform those promises which they have made for the children, or else may be disappointed by their evil inclinations ? Jesus Christ says, indeed, ‘ Hinder not little children from coming to me ;’ but that is that they should come to him as soon as they are advanced in years, as soon as they have learnt their religion, when they may be taught whither they are going, when they are become Christians, when they begin to be able to know Jesus Christ.”

Can any thing more completely expose the ignorance of Tertullian than the above passage ? Children may come to Christ, when they are advanced in years, that is, when they cease to be

children ! This is the very thing which our Lord blamed in his disciples ; they would prevent the children from coming to him, because they were young and uninstructed : but they were rebuked for it by Him who knew the nature of his own kingdom, and who has declared that children are subjects of it. But Tertullian adds another reason why infants should not be baptized, which places his notions in a still more ridiculous point of view. He says, “ What is there that should compel that innocent age to be baptized ? And since they are not allowed the disposal of temporal goods, is it reasonable that they should be entrusted with the concerns of Heaven ? ” So that Christian parents are to take care not to instruct their children in the truths of the Gospel, or make them partakers of the means of grace, until they are able to manage an estate !

The judicious Hooker, whose opinion on such a subject, is entitled to the utmost respect, thus speaks of Tertullian :

“ He was a Montanist, and an enemy unto the Church for condemning that prophetical spirit, which Montanus and his followers did boast they had received ; as if in them Christ had performed his last promise ; as if to them he had sent the Spirit that should be their perfector and final instructor in the mysteries of Christian truth.

*Which exultation of mind made him take all occasions of contradiction.\**

[I ought to state here, that Dr. Kaye, the learned Bishop of Lincoln, differs from Mosheim, in his opinion of the tenets of Montanus. Mosheim supposed that that heresiarch represented himself to be the Paraclete whom our Lord promised to his Apostles, and that he made a distinction between the Paraclete, and the Holy Spirit that was shed upon the Apostles on the day of Pentecost : the office of the former being, as Montanus supposed, (according to Mosheim) to perfect the Gospel by the addition of some doctrines omitted by our Saviour, and to cast a full light upon others which were expressed in an obscure and imperfect manner. Dr. Kaye's opinion, formed after a careful perusal of the works of Tertullian, is, that Montanus conceived himself to be inspired by the same Spirit as the Apostles ; and not that he himself pretended to be the Paraclete.]

\* Eccles. Polity. book ii. sec. 5.

† Eccles. History, illustrated from the writings of Tertullian. p. 27.

## CHAPTER V.

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*On the meaning of the word βαπτιζω.*

OUR opponents maintain that our Lord's commission not only implies that none are to be baptized but such as have faith and repentance, but also expressly provides that the person who is baptized shall be *plunged under water*; for such, they say, is the precise and only meaning of the expression *to baptize*. I must not close this volume without making a few remarks upon this opinion, because the Baptists lay so much stress upon it as to hold, that, if the rite be not administered according to their notion of the mode, the baptism is a nullity; inasmuch as a positive institution must be strictly observed in all its circumstances, and we are not at liberty to deviate in the slightest degree from the original practice. But, indeed, their statement of the case is unfounded and delusive; for, instead of determining the meaning of the word by the admitted practice

of the disciples, they, preposterously, determine the practice by the meaning of the word! And how, will the reader say, do they settle the meaning of the word? Why, chiefly, by ascertaining in what sense it is used by *heathen writers*: they consult the writings of *Pagan antiquity* for the purpose of finding out in what sense the *Jews* understood a word, which was long in use in their religious services! This is absurd: Would a Baptist consult Plato, or Aristotle, or Xenophon, for the purpose of discovering in what sense St. Paul used the word law (*νόμος*)? Yet their conduct in the case of *Baptize* is equally ridiculous and unreasonable. The word *δειπνον* means a supper, a feast, or common meal; it is used in the New Testament for the Lord's Supper, which is certainly as positive an institution as baptism. Now, I ask the Baptists whether they, when they celebrate that solemn rite, take a supper, a feast, a common meal? is a small piece of bread and a drop of wine, *a supper*? According to their own principles in determining the sense of the word Baptism they ought to make the Lord's Supper a meal, for that is undoubtedly the meaning of the word *δειπνον* in Classic writers.

The true question is, in what sense do the writers of the New Testament use the word *Baptize*? If they use it to signify only *immersion* of the whole body, then are the Baptists right.

Let us see: The Pharisee who invited our Lord to dine with him, “ marvelled that he had not washed (*εβαπτισθη*, *baptized*) before dinner.” Luke xi. 38. “ And when the Pharisees come from market, except they wash, (*βαπτισωνται*, *baptize*) they eat not.” Mark, viii. 4. Now was it customary for the Jews generally, as well as the Pharisees, to plunge the whole body under water every day before dinner? No; the preceding verse expressly tells us that the baptism which was customary was the washing of the hands. It was our Lord’s neglect of this custom which moved the astonishment of the Pharisee. But, say the Baptists, although they did not plunge the whole body under water, they wholly immersed the hands: I am not sure of that; see 2 Kings, iii. 11. “ Jehoshaphat said, Is there not here a prophet of the Lord, that we may enquire of the Lord by him? And one of the King of Israel’s servants answered and said, Here is Elisha the son of Shaphat, which *poured water on the hands* of Elijah.” This refers to the *custom* of servants washing their master’s hands, and implies neither more nor less than that Elisha was Elijah’s servant or attendant. The custom alluded to must have been a general and well known one: otherwise it would not have implied what it was designed to denote, viz. the relation of a servant.

But the Baptists will say, The custom *may* have been changed before the time of our Lord : I answer it *may* not. If they assert the change without proof, it will be sufficient for me to deny it without proof. Until evidence of the change be produced, here is an instance of baptism by *pouring*. In Sir R. Ker Porter's Travels he tells us that the custom prevails in Persia to this day. He was at an entertainment given by the prime minister. "A silver-plated jug," says he, "with a long spout, accompanied by a basin of the same metal, was carried round to every guest, by an attendant, who *poured water from the jug on our right hands*, which we held in succession over the basin."\*

In Hebrews, ix. 10, we are told that the Jewish service consisted in "meats, and drinks, and divers washings ( $\betaαπτισμοι$ , *baptisms*) and carnal ordinances." The washings here refer to the various ablutions among the Jews ; and these were generally performed by *sprinkling*. Two of these divers baptisms are mentioned in verses 12 and 13. The first was "by the blood of goats and calves ;" and this was administered, as the Baptists themselves know as well as we do, by sprinkling. The second was by the ashes of an heifer SPRINKLING the unclean."

\* Travels in Georgia, Persia, &c. Vol. i. pp. 238, 239.

Let the reader now turn to 1 Cor. x. 2, " And were all baptized unto Moses in the cloud, and in the sea." This passage is important, inasmuch as it furnishes us with a compendious answer to all the objections of the Baptists as to the *subjects*, as to their *qualifications*, and as to the *mode*. First, as to the subjects, they were *all* baptized, men, women, and *children*; Secondly, they were baptized "unto Moses;" that is, unto the doctrine, and precepts, and ceremonies, which Moses was going to give them: they were baptized, not *after* they were taught and instructed, but *before* they were taught, and that they *might* be taught: and, Thirdly, they were not plunged over head and ears in the waters of the cloud and of the sea, but they were baptized by the copious dew and rain and water, which SPRINKLED them: they certainly were not plunged in the cloud, and as for the sea, we are told expressly that they "went into the midst of the sea, upon the dry ground; and the waters were a wall unto them on their right hand and on their left." Exod. xiv. 22. That they were *sprinkled* by the spray or mist, which was caused by the great agitation of the waters by "the strong east wind," is natural and credible; but that they were *immersed* in the waters is distinctly denied by the sacred historian. To mul-

tiply examples upon this point would be to trifle with the subject, and with the patience of the reader. I will therefore conclude with one remark, in the justice of which I am satisfied that every candid person will coincide with me.

The practice or custom of a whole people is the best expositor of the meaning of their words. Now we know that the Jews, among whom our Lord lived, from whom he chose his Apostles and first Disciples, and to whom he expressly confined for a time the preaching of his blessed Gospel, understood *baptism* to signify pouring and sprinkling, if not to the exclusion of, yet certainly as well as, immersing ; because they expressed their pourings and sprinkling, as we have seen, by the word *Baptisms*. In his commission to his Apostles, our Lord, who certainly knew the ideas which they would attach to the word, has not given any new, or specific, meaning to it ; and, therefore, we must infer that they would understand it in that sense to which they had been accustomed. If the Baptists can prove to us that the Jews used to baptize by immersion, this will only prove that there were three kinds of baptism amongst them, viz. by sprinkling, by pouring, and by immersion ; and since our Blessed Lord has not determined which we are always to use, we are at liberty to administer the rite in any

of those ways which is customary in the Church or country to which we belong. To say that the examples in the New Testament are all in favour of *dipping* is to affirm what can never be proved.

THE END.









